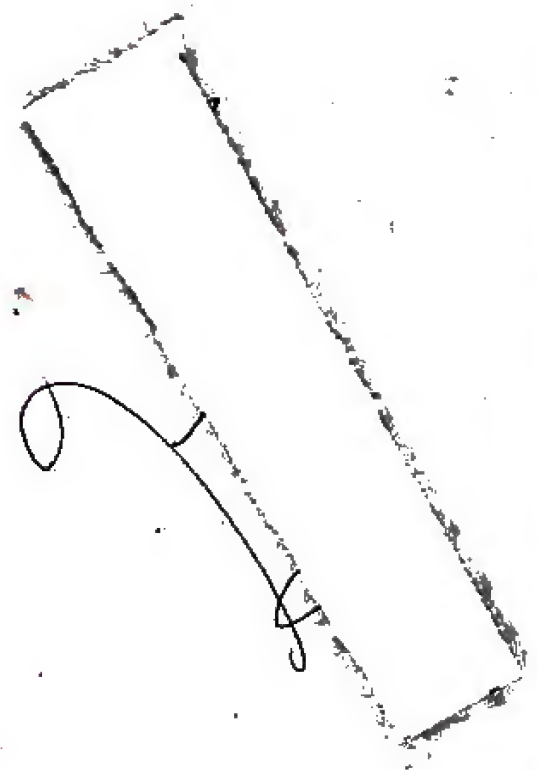


PART IV
THE ABRASIDS



CHAPTER XXI

AS-SAFFAH AND AL-MANSUR

New features of the Abbasids

With the coming of the Abbasids into power, a great change is noticed everywhere. The first new feature of this period is that the Khilafat no longer co-ordinated with the limits of Islam. The authority of the new dynasty was never acknowledged in Spain; and throughout Africa, excepting in Egypt, it was but intermittent and for the most part nominal; while in the east independent dynasties arose.

The Khilafat no longer co-ordinates with Islam

Another change which came over the Arab people owing to the attitude of the new dynasty towards them is that the Arab nation lost martial vigour. "To their hardy life and martial fire were mainly due to the first spread of Islam and material prosperity of the Khilafat. But the race had by this time lost much of its early hardihood and vigour." The spoils of the conquered people had gradually sapped their warlike virtue and so they settled down with well-filled harems. "The Saracen was no longer the conqueror of the world". A French historian said, "The age of conquest had passed, that of civilization had commenced".

Arab nation loses martial vigour

The capital was transferred from Syria to Iraq and the Syrians who were the staunch supporters of the Umayyads lost their influence in the Abbasid Court.

Transfer of capital

Under the Abbasids the old aristocracy gave place to a class of Government officials. At the head of these was the Wazir (Vizier). He was the representative of the Khalifah. By his side stood the executioner. This post was not created under the Umayyads. Persian influence was felt in the Court and with the rise of Persian influence the roughness of Arab life was softened and there opened an era of culture, toleration and scientific research.

New posts created

Persian influence.

Abul Abbas as-Saffah (133-37 A.H./750-754 A.D.)

As-Saffah
proclaimed
Khalifah

Abul Abbas as-Saffah was proclaimed Khalifah in the mosque of Kufah and public homage was done to him in 133 A.H./750 A.D. On his accession, his first task was to wipe out the entire Umayyad race from the face of the earth. "Such wholesale butcheries cast into the shade anything the previous dynasty had ever been accused of". The cruelest of them was perpetrated by the Khalifah's uncle in Palestine. This ill-treatment brought its natural consequence and the followers of the fallen house rose in revolt against the Khalifah in Syria and Mesopotamia. To meet the emergency he sent his brother Abu Jafar with an army and the rebellion was put down very soon.

Capitulation
of Ibn
ira

Yazid ibn Hobaira, Marwan's Viceroy in Iraq, was holding Wasit. He was besieged there by Husayn ibn Kahtaba and Abu Ja'far. At first he appealed to the Umayyads for help but when he found that there was no succour forthcoming, he offered to capitulate. A full amnesty, concluded by Abu Ja'far was ratified by the Khalifah under solemn oath but later on the Khalifah, influenced by Abu Muslim, ordered him to be put to death and the order was carried out properly by Abu Ja'far.

His be-
trayal and
death

Undisputed
master of
Asia and
Egypt

As-Saffah now became the undisputed master of Asia and Egypt and West Africa also acknowledged his authority. The Hashimi banner flew everywhere but outrage still survived in many parts of the Empire. A terrible calamity overtook Mosul. The people refusing obedience to the new Governor, a low-born man, drove him from the city. The Khalifah became very angry and sent his brother Yahya, who proved himself worthy of the title "Shedder of Blood." The men of the city were mercilessly massacred. Abu Salama, who was made Vizier and sometimes acted as confidential adviser of as-Saffah, roused the jealousy of Abu Muslim by his influence over the Khalifah. One night while he was returning home alone from the Khalifah's house he was waylaid and assassinated.

Abu Salama
put to
death

Thus the sanguinary reign of as-Saffah was coming to a close but before his death he nominated his brother Abu Ja'far as his successor to the throne. He died of small-pox in his palace at al-Anbar in 137 A.H./754 A.D. His reign lasted a little less than five years. "The name as-Saffah, or the Blood-thirsty, by which this Khalifah is most commonly known, is well-chosen, for as such he is distinguished beyond all others in a dynasty that had small respect for human life. He intensified his cruelty and guilt by treachery in the face of solemn oaths and also by ingratitude, for amongst his victims there were not a few who had spent their lives in helping him to the throne". In spite of his cruelties, Abul Abbas was recognised as a generous and pious sovereign. He was attentive to his duties.

Nomination
of Abu
Jafar

Death of
as-Saffah

Abu Ja'far al-Mansur (137-59 A.H./754-75 A.D.)

At the time of the death of as-Saffah, Abu Ja'far, who was then on pilgrimage at Makkah, took the oath of allegiance through his cousin, Isa, who acted as his proxy and whom the dying Khalifah had nominated as second in succession. On receiving the intelligence of his brother's death, he came back to Kufah and ascended the throne by assuming the honorific title of al-Mansur, the Victorious. With the accession of al-Mansur a new chapter was opened in the history of the Abbasids. The first few successors of Abul-Abbas were undoubtedly rulers of exceptional ability and capacity who devoted their time, energy and power to the amelioration and advancement of the nation. The fact has been well-illustrated by Ameer Ali in the following words: "They devoted themselves to the building of the new cities, to the construction of roads, caravan serais, canals, fountains, the formation of charitable and educational institutions, the stimulation and protection of letters, and the promotion of commerce and all arts of peace".

Rebellion of Abdullah

Immediately on the accession of al-Mansur to the throne, Abdullah bin 'Ali, his uncle and Gover-

Defeated
by Abu
Muslim

nor of Syria under Saffah, raised the standard of rebellion. Abu Muslim was sent to crush the rebellion and in a battle near Nasibin Abdullah was totally discomfited. Abdullah fled but was eventually placed under charge of his brother Sulayman, Governor of al-Basrah.

Fall and death of Abu Muslim

The Khalifah, instead of rewarding a man who had saved his throne, was now bent on his destruction. The influence of Abu Muslim aroused the jealousy and hatred of the Khalifah. He was virtually the ruler of Khurasan and thus became the source of danger to the throne. The Khalifah thought it wise not to allow the grass to grow under his feet as Abu Muslim's power was going to surpass every limit. He invited Abu Muslim to visit the royal Court on his return journey to Khurasan. He was well-received at the Court and on one unlucky day he was put to death.

Character
of Abu
Muslim

Abu Muslim was by far the greatest figure of the age. "Hardly thirty-five years old, he had by his rare wisdom, zeal and generalship, changed the whole outlook of Islam and raised the House of al-Abbas upon the ruins of the House of Umayya".

Peace
restored in
Persia and
Mesopotamia

After the death of Abu Muslim, a serious rising threatened the empire in Persia under the leadership of Sunbadh who stepped forth as the avenger of Abu Muslim. A similar rebellion followed in Mesopotamia, where the imperial forces were repeatedly discomfited. But within a short time peace was restored in both the places.

End of Abdullah bin 'Ali

The Khalifah might have left Abdullah alone at Basrah, but when it was reported that he had retired for safety into concealment, he became angry and sent his uncles, Sulayman and 'Ali, to bring him to Court. They brought him to Court and ultimately Abdullah was put to prison where he was killed under the crumbled house which had been purposely built for him.

During 140 A.H./757 A.D. a Byzantine attack was repulsed with great loss and the Emperor of Constantinople was compelled to make peace for seven years.

Byzantine
inroad

In 141 A.H./758 A.D. the Khalifah performed the pilgrimage, visited Jerusalem and made a progress through Syria and Mesopotamia. During this time, a Persian sect called Rawendiya (from the name of their town), who identified the Khalifah with God, placed in danger the life of Mansur. They shouted, surrounding the palace, "It is the house of our Lord, he that giveth us food to eat and water to drink". Their activity which provoked the religious section of the people, compelled the Khalifah to imprison 200 of their leaders. This strong attitude of al-Mansur so enraged them that they stormed the prison and rioted all round. The Rawendiya were ultimately extirpated.

Rising of
Rawendiya

Shortly after, the Governor of Khurasan rebelled and al-Mansur sent ibn Khuzayma and his son, al-Mahdi, to put down the rebellion. The rebel was attacked by his own people on their approach and sent to the Khalifah. The rebel with his followers was subjected to severe torture and cruelty.

Campaign
in Khurasan

The Muslim arms were now turned against Tabaristan. The inhabitants of this place had cast off allegiance to Islam under the leadership of Ispahend, but by the heavy pressure of the Muslim army they were compelled to open the gate to the Muslim force and Tabaristan was annexed to the empire. No sooner had this conquest been achieved than the people of Deilam rose in revolt and raided the empire but they were driven back after some fighting.

Conquest of
Tabaristan

A new danger now threatened the dynasty. It was from two descendants of al-Hasan, Muhammad and Ibrahim, who had ambitious design upon the Khalifat. They lived in Madinah where they exercised great influence over the people of the country. Al-Mansur saw in them the possibility of future trouble to his dynasty. He wanted to extirpate them and with this object he attempted to seize

Rebellion of
Muhammad
and Ibrahim

them, but they escaped to Aden and Sind. He then arrested all the leading members of the family, including their old father, Abdullah and treated them with severe cruelty and shocking barbarity. These atrocities led Muhammad and Ibrahim to rise in simultaneous revolt at Madinah and Basrah. At first correspondence was made between the Khalifah and Muhammad but it ended in failure. Al-Mansur now sent his nephew Isa with a Syrian army against the rebel, Muhammad. Before the actual battle happened many of his followers departed for home and he was left only with 300 men. He with this small force went forth to fight but fell pierced by an arrow. His head was then sent to the Khalifah. But the war was continued by Ibrahim at Basrah, who on many occasions defeated the imperial troops but while he stopped pursuit, the Abbasids seeing the opportunity turned and many of their men jumped upon him. In the fight that followed, Ibrahim was defeated and killed. "Thus after holding the empire for three months in terror the 'Alid rebellion came to a close".

When this cloud passed away, al-Mansur returned to the site of his new capital, Baghdad. "The beautiful site, central and salubrious, attracted the eyes of Mansur" who resolved to found the new capital of Islam. The first brick was laid by the Khalifah with his own hands in 145 A.H./762 A.D. It thus became the capital of the Abbasids and the centre of attraction of the Middle Ages. Lying on the west bank of the Tigris, Baghdad was admirably situated at the heart of the empire. The eastern shore was provided with accommodation for a large force. Al-Mansur founded it purely for his Court and as a strong military position. He also built the city of Rafika and strengthened the defences of Kufah and Basrah.

In the eleventh year of his reign al-Mansur appointed his son, Mahdi, as his successor to the throne in place of his nephew, Isa who was forced to give up his claim.

Al-Mansur wanted to conquer Spain where Abdur Rahman, grandson of Hisham of the Umayy-

Rising in
Madinah
and Basrah

Muhammad
fell fighting

Ibrahim
defeated
and killed

Baghdad
founded in
145 A.H.

Rafika

Mahdi
appointed
heir-apparent

yad dynasty, had established his suzerainty after his escape from Syria. The imperial forces were defeated by Abdur Rahman and the plan of al-Mansur's conquest of Spain thus ended in smoke.

Africa was a source of constant danger and trouble to the Khalifah. Both the Berbers and the Arabs, leaning towards the Kharijite heresy, disowned the Abbasid succession. Over and again, Generals were despatched against them but with little success. Aghlab, the then Governor, was surrounded by the Khawarij and was ultimately killed. His successor, Umar was also killed during the siege of Kairowan which was conquered by the Khawarij. Al-Mansur became furious at this and he sent another army under the new Governor, Yazid ibn Muhallab. He defeated the Khawarij, killed their leader and restored peace and order in the country.

Though peace was restored in Africa, there were troubles elsewhere. In Armenia, the Khazar hordes made great havoc and carried away multitudes of men and women as prisoners. In the East a rebellion was led by the ruler of Herat, Ustadh Sheesh, and a more serious rising took place in the country around Mosul. It caused great alarm, for a strong 'Alid feeling prevailed in Hamadan. The Khalifah got much frightened and as the Kurds were giving him troubles again and again, he appointed Khalid, the Barmaki, as Governor of Maw-sil. Khalid soon brought the province into order by curbing the power of the Kurds.

The last few years of his reign were free from anxiety. But the heavy exertion, which he had to undergo for the new State, had at last told upon his health and anticipating his short stay in this mundane world, he sent for his son and gave him necessary instruction for running the administration of the future empire. After this he left Baghdad for Makkah to pass his last days in the Holy Land but died on the way, some three miles from Makkah, and was buried in the Holy City in 159 A.H./775 A.D.

Unsuccessful
attempt in
Spain

Aghlab, the
Governor
of Africa
killed

Peace
restored

Herat

Mosul

Death of
al-Mansur

Estimate of al-Mansur

Al-Mansur reigned nearly twenty-two years. He was the real founder of the Abbasid dynasty, although as-Saffah was the first Khalifah of this dynasty. His character was a mixture of opposites. To the enemy he was cruel and treacherous and to friends he was kind and liberal. He never spared a man who was considered dangerous to the throne. The murder of Abu Muslim and Abdullah who helped him greatly to raise the Abbasids to power and prestige, and his treatment to the descendants of 'Ali, the fourth Khalifah, are the darkest records in the Abbasid history. The famous historian Suyuti says, "Mansur was the first, who occasioned dissensions between the Abbasids and the 'Alids, for before that they were united". If we forget the perfidious side of his character, "our estimate of Mansur," says Muir, "would be very different". "As a Muslim his life was religious and exemplary. Nothing profane was ever seen at his court". He was a true dispenser of justice and he himself set up an example to his subjects of strict obedience to the constituted court of justice. He did not feel any shame to appear before the Qazi as an ordinary litigant when he was summoned by the latter on the complaint of some camel-owners. He admired the Qazi and rewarded him for fearlessness and impartial judgement, though the decision was not in his favour. As a politician, a statesman and a ruler he was almost unrivalled in his time. He devoted his time and energy to the development of the condition of his subjects and their dwelling places. He was a man of rare energy and strength of mind. He was cool and calculating. He was diligent in the business of the State of which "he devoted the first part of every day; the afternoon he spent with his family; and again after evening prayer he heard the despatches of the day and took counsel with his minister, retiring late to rest and rising with the day-spring for morning prayer".

In his reign the East began to exercise a marked effect on the manners and habits of the West. Persian costume became the fashionable dress at

Mixture of
opposites

As states-
man and
ruler he
was unri-
valled

Daily
routine

Court. Scholars from the East held high posts. The Arabs lost their pre-eminence not only in the Army and at Court also in the society at large. He was the patron of arts and science. He established charitable and educational institutions throughout the Empire. Under him literature, history, medicine and especially astronomy began to be studied and a provision was made for the translation of foreign books on Arts and Science.

Persian
influence

Patron of
arts and
science

CHAPTER XXII

AL-MAHDI AND AL-HADI

Al-Mahdi (159—69 A.H./775—85 A.D.)

Al-Mahdi succeeded his father, al-Mansur, in 159 A.H./775 A.D. He was by nature mild and generous. He inaugurated his reign by opening the prison doors to all but the worst and most dangerous class of felons. The well-filled treasury of his father gave him the opportunity to fulfil his objects. He enlarged and beautified the mosques of the Holy Cities and of the capital towns elsewhere. The postal service was greatly developed. The capital became an emporium of trade with all parts of the world. Music, poetry, literature and philosophy refined the age. In course of his pilgrimage to Makkah he clothed the poor and distributed among the citizens of Makkah a fabulous amount of presents. He fixed pensions for the indigent and constructed roads with wells and reservoirs for pilgrims. He formed his bodyguard from among the citizens of Madinah. He tried to heal the wounds done by his father to the family of the Prophet. The Government officers who were subjected to torture and oppression under the late Khalifah, were now exempted from heavy fines and they began to feel themselves secure. Thus his policy was quite different from that of his father.

Revolt in Khurasan

In Khurasan many people were discontented. The promises made to them during the war against the Umayyads, had not been fulfilled and the new Khalifah, Mahdi, did not respond to their demands. A dangerous revolt in 160 A.H./776 A.D. under the leadership of certain Yusuf bin Ibrahim was suppressed by Yazid bin Mazyad, who defeated him, took him prisoner and brought him to Baghdad where he with several of his officers were crucified and killed. In the following year he was menaced

by a far more dangerous revolt led by a sectary known generally as *Mokanna* or "the Veiled One"—so named because he always appeared in public wearing a mask. He declared himself God incarnate. He taught his followers the immanence of the Deity in Adam, in Abu Muslim and lastly in himself. He gathered around him a great number of adherents who worshipped him as God. After some success the pretender was killed in Kish and his head was cut off and sent to Mahdi in the year 163 A.H./779 A.D.

Mokanna,
'the Veiled
one'

Byzantine raid

The Romans raided the Muslim territories in 163 A.H./779 A.D. They even conquered Marash and annihilated the Muslim army sent from Dabiq. Mahdi sent Hasan bin Kahtaba who made a victorious raid as far as Adhruliya. But a fresh inroad demanded Mahdi himself in the field. He began his march in the early spring of 780 A.D. taking with him his second son Harun, and leaving his elder son, Musa, as his lieutenant in Baghdad. Traversing Mesopotamia and Syria he entered Cilicia and established himself on the bank of Jihan (Pyramus). Thence he despatched a big army under the command of Harun. Harun captured the fortress of Samalu after a siege of thirty-eight days. In consequence of this feat, Mahdi made Harun Governor of the whole western part of the empire including Azarbaijan and Armenia. Two years later war broke out between the Muslims and the Greeks. Leo IV, the eastern Roman emperor, left his minor son, Constantine VI, on the throne. The mother of the prince, named Irena, acted as regent and assumed the title of Augusta. By her orders an army of 90,000 men under the command of Michael entered Asia Minor. Harun then made a victorious march along the coast as far as the Bosphorus. Irena, mother of the prince, took alarm, sued for peace and obtained a truce for three years but only on the humiliating terms of paying an annual tribute of 90,000 dinars and supplying the Muslims with guides and markets on their way home. This brilliant

Campaign
of Harun

Irena sued
for peace

Accession

Favourable
reign

Guard of
Madinah

Yusuf
defeated
and killed

Death of
Mahdi

success so increased Mahdi's affection for Harun that he appointed him successor-designate after Musa and named him ar-Rashid (the follower of the right cause). Three years later, he resolved to give him precedence in the matter of succession and for this reason Musa was recalled from Jurjan where he was engaged in subduing the rebels. Musa, informed of his father's intention, refused to obey this order. Mahdi determined to march in person against him. But he died on the way at a place called Masandan.

Character

The reign of Mahdi was a period of great prosperity. Much was done for the organisation of the Empire. Agriculture and commerce flourished, revenue increased and the people fared well. The power of the State was acknowledged even in the Far East; the Emperor of China, the King of Tibet and many Indian Princes concluded treaties with the Khalifah. He was an ardent champion of the orthodox faith, repudiating all the extravagant doctrines preached by the Abbasid missionaries and formerly professed by his father. In particular, "he persecuted mercilessly the Manichaeans and all sorts of free thinkers". He passionately loved Khaizuran, the mother of Musa and Harun, who exercised great influence over him and the State.

Persecution
of Mani-
chaeans

Al-Hadi (169-70 A.H./785-86 A.D.)

Hadi tries
to supersede
Harun

On the death of Mahdi Harun recognised the succession of his brother, Musa, and despatched to him in Jurjan the imperial seal and sceptre with letters of condolence and congratulation. He brought the army which had accompanied Mahdi peacefully back to Baghdad. Musa returned in all haste to the capital and assumed the title of al-Hadi.

Al-Hadi could not believe in the loyalty of his brother. He formed a plan for excluding him from the Khilafat and transmitting the succession to his son, Ja'far. With this object he threw into prison Yahya bin Khalid, Harun's principal adviser, and several others of his brother's servants whom he considered dangerous to the throne. Thus the Court was divided into two groups—one party headed by

Hadi and the another by Harun. When the rivalry became serious, Harun left the Court for his own personal safety.

The Governor of Madinah ill-treated some members of Husayn's family on a charge of drunkenness. Husayn bin Ali bin Hasan III raised an insurrection at Madinah with the support of numerous adherents. Thence he went to Makkah where he was attacked and killed in the combat with many other 'Alids. His maternal uncle Idris bin Abdullah, a brother of Muhammad and Ibrahim succeeded in escaping to Egypt. Being helped by the postmaster, he passed into West Africa where he was welcomed by the Berbers and there laid the foundation of the Idrisid dynasty. Hadi died after a reign of less than two years. Under him and two of his successors Persian influence and fashion reached their height. The 'New Year' and other festivals were observed and Persian dress and hats began to be worn.

Alid rising
at Madinah

Idris
escapes to
Africa

His death
170 A.H.
787 A.D.

CHAPTER XXIII

HARUN AR-RASHID

(170-94 A.H./786-809 A.D.)

His accession

Harun ascended the throne at the age of nearly twenty-five without any opposition. With his accession the Abbasid empire entered into another brilliant period of Saracenic rule in Asia. He was not only celebrated in the East but in the West as well. The Arabian Nights period of the Abbasids began with him. The stories of the "Thousand and One Nights" which have made the name of Harun so famous throughout the ages have lent a special charm to this reign.

The first apt of Harun was to choose as Prime Minister his former tutor, Yahya bin Khalid, and to give important posts to the two sons of Yahya, Fadl and Ja'far. The success and brilliancy of his reign were mainly due to the sincere services of the Barmakid family which was endowed in the highest degree with those qualities of generosity and liberality which the Arabs praised so highly. The founder of this family was Khalid bin Barmak who by virtue of his meritorious services rendered to the Abbasid family enjoyed a high post under as-Saffah and Mansur. His son Yahya, who was a man of ability and capacity, was appointed vizier of the empire when Rashid became Khalifah. Being entrusted with all the tasks of Government, Yahya brought the most distinguished abilities to the exercise of his office. He put the frontier in a good state of defence; he filled the public treasury and carried the splendour of the throne to the highest point. Later on, owing to old age, Yahya resigned the post and his two gifted sons, Fadl and Ja'far were given the same post and entrusted with the same responsibilities. His other two sons, Musa and Muhammad,

Rise of
the Barmakids

were also men of great ability and they served the State with great distinction.

Although the administration of Harun's State was entrusted to strong and skilful hands, yet the first year of his reign was not free from troubles and difficulties. A man of the house of 'Ali named Yahya bin Abdullah, who had taken refuge in the land of Deilam on the south-western shores of the Caspian Sea, publicly claimed the Khilafat. Harun sent against him an army of 50,000 men under the command of Fadl who instead of fighting induced him to submit by promising him safety and a brilliant position at the Court of Baghdad. Yahya accepted the proposal on condition that the Khalifah should send him letters of pardon counter-signed by the highest legal authorities. Harun consented and Yahya went to Baghdad where he was given warm reception. But after some months he was accused of conspiracy and the Khalifah put him into prison where he died. Fearing fresh insurrections of the 'Alids, Harun secured the person of another descendant of 'Ali, Musa bin Ja'far, surnamed al-Kazim, who enjoyed great esteem at Madinah and had already been arrested and released again by Mahdi. This man was brought by the Khalifah himself to Baghdad and there he died. Harun did not forget the hereditary enemy of Islam. In the first year of his reign all the strong places of Kinnerisn and Mesopotamia were formed into a special province which received the name of 'al-Awasim' (the defending fortresses). He rebuilt and fortified the city of Tursus. The Muslim armies were able to advance boldly into Asia Minor and almost every year successful raids were made. When the Khalifah himself was in the midst of these success in Asia Minor, he was called by the sudden attack of the Khazars. These people had made an irruption into Armenia and caused a great havoc in the country. Two valiant Generals, Khozeima and Yazid ibn Mazyad, were sent against the Khazars and within a short time they drove them out of Armenia. During this time Harun was thinking of performing pilgrimage. Harun was noted for his careful obser-

Rising of
the 'Alids

Yahya put
into prison
and died
there

Affairs in
Asia Minor

Nomination
of al-Amin,
al-Mamun
and al-
Mutamin

Zubayda's
visit to
Makkah

vances of the rituals of Islam. Every day he performed one hundred prostrations and distributed 100 dirhams in alms. He went to Makkah ten times for the performance of pilgrimage and on every occasion he scattered munificent largesse amongst the people. But before his going to Makkah he wanted to fix the order of succession. The pressure also came from the quarter of Empress Zubayda. He executed a deed by which he appointed his eldest son under the title of al-Amin, his immediate successor and after him the second under the title of al-Mamun and after al-Mamun the third under the title of al-Mutamin. In the same year, Empress Zubayda visited Makkah. She constructed the famous canal at her own expense for the inhabitants of Makkah, who had been suffering from scarcity of water.

The fall of the Barmakids

In the beginning of the following year Harun bent upon the ruin of the Barmakids who for seventeen years served the Khalifah with unswerving fidelity and extraordinary ability and under whom "the people", says Ameer 'Ali, "were prosperous and happy, the empire had grown rich and strong, national wealth had increased and the arts of civilised life were cultivated everywhere". But their sudden fall is a great surprise to us. Historians have explained the causes of their downfall in different ways. Some of the historians have put forward the story of the marriage of Jafar with Harun's sister, Abbasa and the subsequent birth of a child from this spouse. But this has not been accepted by the famous historian Ibn Khaldun. According to him the real cause of their fall is to be found "in the manner in which they seized upon all authority and assumed the absolute disposition of the public revenue, so much so that Rashid was often forced to the necessity of asking for and not obtaining from the Chancellor small sums of money. Their influence was unlimited, and their fame had spread in every direction. All the high offices of the State, civil as well as military, were filled by functionaries chosen from their family, or from among their partisans. All faces turned towards them; all heads inclined in their

presence; on them alone rested the hopes of applicants and candidates; they showered their bounties on all sides, in every province of the empire, in the cities as well as in the villages; their praises were sung by all and they were far more popular than their master." From the above facts it can be said that their absolute power and position in the Court roused the jealousy of many, especially Fadl bin Rabi who sought the opportunities of instilling distrust against them into the mind of the Khalifah and of making him feel that he was Khalifah only in name. Harun forgot their services and ordered the execution of Ja'far who had just taken leave of him after a day's hunting. The following day, his father Yahya, his brother Fadl and all other Barmakids were arrested and imprisoned; all their property was confiscated. The only Barmakid who remained unmolested with his family was Muhammad, brother of Yahya who had been the Chamberlain of the Khalifah till 179 A.H./795 A.D.

Execution
of Ja'far
and others

In the same year a revolution in Constantinople overthrew the empress, Irena. The new emperor, Nicephorus, thinking himself strong enough to refuse the payment of tribute, wrote an insulting letter to Harun. The letter was written thus: "Irena had paid the money the double of which thou shouldst have paid to her. It was but a woman's weakness. Wherefore, return what thou hast taken or the sword shall decide". Harun, reading the letter flew into rage and wrote on the back of the letter, "From Harun, the Commander of the Faithful, to Nicephorus, the dog of a Roman. I have read the letter, the answer thou shall not hear but see". Harun was as good as his word. He at once started and entered Asia Minor and took Heraclea, plundering and burning along his whole line of march, till Nicephorus, in alarm, sued for peace. But as soon as the Khalifah came to Makkah, he broke the treaty. Harun retraced his steps and attacked Nicephorus. Being defeated Nicephorus fled from the battle-field and the prayer for peace was granted. But the disturbance of Khurasan again encouraged him to break the treaty and overrun the country as

Insulting
letter of
Nicephorus

Treachery
of Nice-
phorus

far as Anazarba on the frontier, where he took many prisoners. Harun could not tolerate this any longer. He was compelled to take the field again. He entered Asia Minor with an army of 1,35,000 regulars. Heraclea was taken with many other places and Thana was made a military station. At the same time his Admiral conquered Cyprus. Nicephorus was so completely beaten that he was compelled to submit to very harsh conditions. But in 192 A.H./ 807 A.D. the Greeks again broke the treaty and attacked the Muslim territories and inflicted a severe loss on the Muslims which the Khalifah was not in a position to retrieve.

Ibrahim
appointed
Governor

Harun wanted to conquer Africa and several attempts were made for the fulfilment of his grand object. Ibrahim bin Aghlab who was the then ruler of Africa made a proposal to Harun for amicable settlement. The proposal was accepted by the Khalifah who appointed Ibrahim Governor of Africa.

Syria in
constant
fighting

Al-Walid
and
Kharijite
leader

During his reign the ancient Syrian jealousies broke out and kept Damascus for two years in continual disorder but ultimately it was suppressed. Some-what later, Mosul was the scene of rebellion which lasted for two years until the Khalifah took possession of the city and demolished its wall. A still more serious rising occurred in Armenia and Halwan under a Kharijite leader, al-Walid bin Tarif. After the death of this leader his sister Layla assumed the command; but this insurrection was also suppressed.

Harun
visits Reiy

Rebellion
of Rab in
Samar-kand

We now turn our attention to Khurasan where a serious trouble was going on; but the rebellion was cut down by the Governor, 'Ali ibn Isa. Some years after the Khalifah, hearing unfavourable reports of his lieutenant's tyranny, came to ar-Reiy. 'Ali ibn Isa hastened to meet the Khalifah on his arrival at Reiy with a great quantity of costly presents. The Khalifah confirming him in his post, returned to his Court. In the following year Rab ibn Laith raised the standard of revolt in Samar-kand and defeated the son of 'Ali ibn Isa. Thereupon 'Ali fled from Balkh and Rab rapidly gained

The
Khalifah
himself
takes the
field

Death of
Harun

possession of all the country beyond the Oxus. The Khalifah on learning the tyranny and rapacity of 'Ali, sent Harthama with a large force in order to subdue the rebellion. The Khalifah's hope that Rab would submit on condition of receiving a free pardon was not fulfilled and he determined to set out himself to Khurasan, taking with him his second son, Mamun. On the journey he was attacked by an internal malady which carried him off, ten months after his departure from Baghdad (March, 809 A.D.).

Estimate of Harun ar-Rashid

Harun ar-Rashid was the greatest Khalifah of the Abbasid dynasty and one of the greatest rulers of the world. "The ninth century opened with two important names standing supremacy in world affairs—Charlemagne in the West and Harun in the East. Of the two Harun was undoubtedly the more powerful and represented the higher culture".* "Faithful in the observance of his religious duties abstemious in his life, unostentatiously pious and charitable and yet fond of surrounding himself with the pomp and insignia of grandeur, he impressed his personality on popular imagination and exercised great influence by his character on society".** A soldier by instinct and training, Harun often led the army against the Greeks and won many victories over them. Though he was surpassed by his great son, Mamun in respect of the patronage of arts and literature, he had no superior in strength of character and grandeur of intellect in contemporary history of the world. During his reign the general prosperity of the people had reached its climax and gigantic progress was made in arts and civilization.

Greatness
of Harun

Harun ar-Rashid was gifted with courage and extraordinary ability with which he ruled over the vast empire for twenty-three years. Peace and

* P. K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*.

** Ameer Ali, *A Short History of the Saracens*.

Public
worksPatrons of
arts and
literatureThe Hanafi
School
flourished

order prevailed in the whole empire. The name of Harun ar-Rashid was so much feared in the empire that traders, merchants, scholars and pilgrims could travel without the least apprehension of danger in the streets. The perfect immunity from danger with which the people travelled through the vast empire testifies to the excellence and vigour of his administration. He used to travel all over the empire to know the actual condition of his subjects and strove to the best of his power to minimize their sorrows and sufferings. On many occasions he distributed huge amounts of money among the poor and the needy. For the welfare of his subjects he established schools and colleges, hospitals and dispensaries, built mosques and constructed roads and canals. "No Khalifah, either before, or after, displayed such energy and activity in various spheres of progress whether for pilgrimage, for administration or for war". But what has chiefly made his Khilafat illustrious is that it ushered in the era of letters. Many distinguished men—wazirs, judges, orators, traditionalists, poets, singers, musicians—shed lustre on his court and raised Baghdad to the position of a city conspicuous not only for its extent, riches and splendour, but also for its learning and civilisation. Asmai, the grammarian, Shafei, Abdullah bin Idris, Isa bin Yunus, Ibrahim Mosuli, the musician, and Gabriel, the physician, flourished in his reign. It was also in his reign that the Hanafi School of Law thrived under the guidance of the Chief Qazi Abu Yusuf. He enlarged the department founded by al-Mansur for the translation of scientific works into Arabic.

The victorious campaigns against the Byzantines and the defeat of Nicephorus contributed no less towards his fame with his contemporaries. Finally, his own attainments, his liveliness, his sense of refined social pleasure, his illuminating conversation, coupled with rich presents which he so freely distributed—attracted to himself the most gifted men of his time. It was no wonder that the later writers of fiction looked back to the time of Harun ar-Rashid as the golden age of the Khilafat.

The name of Harun was so noised throughout the East and the West that the Emperor of China and the Frankish Emperor, Charlemagne, sent envoys to the Court of the Khalifah to cultivate his friendship. Harun exchanged presents with them. In short, "weigh him as carefully as you like in the scale of historical criticism, Harun ar-Rashid will always take rank with the greatest sovereigns and rulers of the world".*

Embassies
of China
and Char-
lemagne

*Ameer Ali *A Short History of the Saracens*.

CHAPTER XXIV

AL-AMIN AND AL-MAMUN

Al-Amin (194—198 A.H./809—813 A.D.)

Fazl, prime
minister of
Amin

Mamun's
administra-
tion in the
East

On the death of Harun ar-Rashid, his eldest son Amin ascended the throne of Baghdad. Amin was a lover of luxury and pleasure. So, he left the charge of administration in the hands of his Prime Minister, Fazl Ibn Rabi and kept himself engaged in pleasure and pomp. His brother Mamun was the Governor of the eastern provinces. He became dear to all by virtue of his character and his mild administration won for him widespread reputation. His popularity and strength of wealth and force became the cause of Amin's anxiety. He dismissed Mamun from the Governorship of Khurasan and declared the nominations of his son, Musa as his successor by violating the will of his father. At this, Mamun was compelled to declare war against Amin.

Civil war between Amin and Mamun

Causes of
civil war

In 791 A.D. Harun ar-Rashid nominated his son Amin as his successor and seven years later, his second son, Mamun was nominated as heir-presumptive to succeed Amin after his death. Harun drew up a document in which Amin's and Mamun's succession was mentioned along with their solemn oath to abide by the arrangement made by their father. Both the brothers pledged that they would not violate this covenant.

Difference
between
Amin and
Mamun

The two brothers were quite different in character, intelligence and abilities. Amin was the son of Empress Zubayda and was tutored by his maternal uncle, Isa. Mamun was the son of a Persian wife of Harun. Though both were educated in the same manner, yet Amin grew up to be a frivolous, pleasure-loving prince, although he was well-versed in the Arabic language. Mamun was equally learned. He knew Islamic law, theology and philosophy.

While Mamun was organizing well the affairs of the principality which was given to him, Amin was leading the country to the brink of ruin and destruction. He led a life of ease and comfort surrounded by beautiful damsels and thereby neglected the affairs of the State. He did not try to redress the grievances of his subjects.

Before his death Harun ar-Rashid led his army to Khurasan. During this time the army and the royal treasury he carried with him to the eastern provinces, were given to Mamun by a Will in order to defend the eastern provinces. On the death of Harun, Fazl bin Rabbi, the chief adviser of the late Khalifah who preferred Amin to Mamun for weak character placed the army with the treasury at the disposal of the new Khalifah and thereby broke Harun's last instructions.

Treachery
of Fazl bin
Rabbi

When Amin came to see the popularity and reputation of Mamun in the eastern provinces, he could not tolerate it. At the advice of the Prime Minister Fazl bin Rabbi and others he nominated his own son, Musa, as his successor and thus violated the covenant made between Mamun and himself. The violation of the covenant was the main cause of the civil war. Mamun replied to Amin's action by closing his frontiers, so that no letter or spy might reach the people of Khurasan.

Violation
of the cove-
nant was
the main
cause of
war

Amin immediately despatched to Khurasan an army of 40,000 under the command of Ali bin Isa. Mamun sent an army of less than 4,000 men of his faithful Khurasanians under the leadership of Zahir bin Husayn. The two armies met under the walls of Ray (May, 811 A.D.) and a severe battle was fought in which Ali bin Isa was defeated and killed. After the defeat of Amin's army, Mamun took the title of Khalifah. In 814 A.D. Amin was killed at the hands of an assassin.

Defeat of
Amin

Amin's troubled and inglorious reign lasted for four years and eight months. As a ruler he was totally incompetent. He hardly comprehended the importance of the affairs with which he was called upon to deal with. He acted on the advice of those

who for the time had his confidence and occupied himself mainly with the affairs of his *harem*.

Al-Mamun (198—218 A.H./813—933 A.D.)

On the death of his brother Amin, al-Mamun took the reins of Government in his own hands. But he did not come to the capital at that time. He kept himself busy with the philosophical discussions at Merv and left the entire administration of the State in the hands of the Prime Minister, Fadl bin Sahl. The result of his absence from the capital was chaos and disorder in the State. The situation in Iraq and Syria became frightful and a member of the Umayyads named Nasir ibn Sabath, faithful to the memory of the Khalifah, took up arms to avenge his fall and defied the imperial troops for over five years. In the following year a more dangerous rebellion broke out in Iraq. A certain Ibn Tabataba appeared in Kufah and invited the people to take an oath of allegiance to the descendants of the Prophet. He was encouraged and supported by Abu Saraya, a notable adventurer. He placed his army under Abu Saraya who completely defeated the army sent by Hasan bin Sahl against whom the rebels had risen in revolt. But Abu Saraya, no longer content to play a second part, poisoned his chief, Ibn Tabataba and put in his place another of the family of 'Ali, Muhammad bin Muhammad. Abu Saraya's success continued and Basrah, Wasit and Madain fell into his hands. Makkah, Madinah and Yaman were also mastered by the 'Alids who committed all kinds of atrocities. Abu Saraya even began to menace the capital when Hasan bin Sahl hastily sent for Harthama bin Ayan, who at first refused to comply with his request but at last consented and at once turned the tide of disaster.

The troops of the 'Alids were everywhere driven back and the whole of Iraq again fell into the hands of the Abbasids. Kufah opened its gates and Basrah was taken by assault. Abu Saraya fled to Mesopotamia but was made prisoner and beheaded later on. The revolt in Arabia was thus sup-

Mamun at Merv.

Rebellion of Narr in Asia Minor

Disorder in Iraq

Capture of Iraq by Harthama

Abu Saraya defeated and slain

pressed. After the subjugation of the rebels, Harthama was asked to go to Iraq but he refused to go and resolved to go to Merv first. He wanted to give the Khalifah the real information about the critical state of things which the Prime Minister was hiding from him. Fadl, informed of his intentions, poisoned the mind of the Khalifah against the old General, so much so that when Harthama arrived he cast him into prison where he died shortly afterwards.

Imprisonment and death of Harthama

When the tidings of Harthama's death came to Baghdad the people rose against al-Hasan and after three days' fighting drove him from the city. He first took refuge in al-Madain and eventually retired to Wasit. The people placed at their head Mansur bin Mahdi who refused to assume the title of Khalifah but agreed to conduct the Government in the name of al-Mamun.

Hasan fled to Wasit

Meanwhile at Merv, Mamun took a decision which fell like a thunderbolt on the Abbasids. In the year 202 A.H./817 A.D., he nominated Imam 'Ali ar-Riza, son of Musa al-Kazim, a member of the house of 'Ali, as his successor to the Khilafat and prescribed black, the colour of the Abbasids, in favour of green, the colour of the house of 'Ali. This step raised a hue and cry among the Abbasids. The people refused to take the oath of allegiance to 'Ali bin Musa, declared Mamun deposed and elected Ibrahim bin Mahdi to the throne. The other provinces followed the example of Baghdad. In this critical moment 'Ali ar-Riza came to Mamun to inform him of the real state of affairs and requested him to go to Baghdad once. Mamun realized that the insurrection was due to his own subservice to Fadl. He at once gave orders for his Court to march towards the capital. Arrived at Sarakahs, al-Fadl was found murdered in his bath and shortly after 'Ali ar-Riza died suddenly. After the death of Fadl his brother Hasan bin Sahl was appointed prime minister and his daughter Buran was given in marriage to Mamun afterwards. In the year 204 A.H./819 A.D. Mamun entered Baghdad and with his entry all the disturbances disappeared and peace was restored.

Mamun proclaimed 'Ali ar-Riza his successor

Baghdad revolted

Ibrahim proclaimed Khalifah

Murder of Fadl

Mamun entered Baghdad

Insurrection
in Egypt

Tahir was appointed Governor of the Eastern provinces. After his death his son Talha succeeded him to the post. His another son named Abdullah was appointed Governor of Egypt and Syria. Abdullah was a favourite of Mamun. He brought Nasr bin Sabath to sujection in Mesopotamia. After the restoration of peace in Mesopotamia, Abdullah proceeded to Egypt where the situation was aggravated by the inroad of the Spanish Muslims who were expelled by the Umayyads. On arriving at Alexandria he found that they created disturbances and when Abdullah asked them to surrender, they sought permission to go to Crete and their prayer was granted. They, within a short time of their arrival, conquered the island of Crete with the help of the Egyptian Governor. Two years before, the island of Sicily was brought by Ziyadatullah Aghlab under the sway of Khalifah.

Conquest
of Crete

Babek's
rebellion

Abdullah was now employed against the brigand Babek. This famous freebooter was for twenty years the terror of the Northern provinces of the Khalifat. He mercilessly slaughtered men and carried away women. But at last he, being driven out by the Khalifah's army, secretly invited the Byzantine emperor to attack the Muslim territory. Abdullah defeated the enemy and compelled them to sue for peace. The Khalifah then ordered to build a strong military settlement at Tyana. After this he set out for Asia Minor to put himself at the head of the army but died of fever brought on by bathing in the Chill river, Pedendon, 40 miles from Tarsus, at the age of forty-eight in 218 A.H./August, 833 A.D.

War with
the Byzan-
tine

Death of
Mamun in
833 A.D.

Estimate of al-Mamun

Al-Mamun
was the
most dis-
tinguished
figure of the
Abbasids

Al-Mamun was unquestionably the most distinguished figure of the House of Abbas, nay of the whole Islamic world. He was not only a brave soldier but also a good administrator. His will to work, his prudence, his clemency and judgement, his sagacity and liberality are the chief features of his character. His reign forms the most glorious epoch in the history of Islam. "The twenty years of his reign have

left enduring monuments of the intellectual development of the Muslims in all directions of thought". The intellectual advancement was not restricted to a particular branch but it prevailed the whole cultural domain. Mathematics, astronomy, medicine and philosophy made an extraordinary progress during this period. He fully realized the truth that the actual happiness of his people lay in education and culture and he translated his realization into practice by opening schools and colleges in all directions. He made no distinction of creed or race and threw public offices open to all. Liberty of conscience and religion was given to all. He established a Council of State in which Muslims and non-Muslims equally participated.

Civilization
and culture

State
Council of
Mamun

Mamun interested himself in questions of religious dogma. He had embraced the Mu'tazilite doctrines about free will and predestination and was in particular shocked at the opinion which had spread among the Muslim doctors that the Quran was the uncreated word of God. In the year 212 A.H./817 A.D., he published an edict by which the Mu'tazilite doctrine was declared to be the religion of the State, and the orthodox faith was condemned as heretical. At the same time he ordered all his subjects to honour 'Ali as the best creature of God after the Prophet and forbade the praise of Muawiyah. In 218 A.H./833 A.D. a new edict appeared by which all judges and doctors were summoned to renounce the error of the 'uncreated word of God.' Most of them expressed their agreement with the views of the Khalifah, but a few stood firm in their conviction among whom was Ahmad bin Hanbal (founder of the Habali School), who was ordered to be put into prison. Two of Mamun's successors maintained the edict and Ahmad bin Hanbal was flogged ultimately at their hands.

The
Mu'tazilites

Mamun's reign was the most glorious and brilliant of all in the intellectual history of Islam. His reign was the revival of learning both in the East and the West. At this Court were munificently entertained men of science and letters, poets, physicians and philosophers. Besides

Science and
literature

Assembly
of learned
men

Works of
translation

Observatory
established

Philosophical
re-union

being an age of the philologists and grammarians "it was the age also of the collectors of traditions, such as the great Bukhari and of historians as al-Wakidi". Moreover, the Jews and the Christians were welcomed at the court not only for their learning but for being well-versed both in Arabic and the language and literature of Greece. He completed the works of translation started by his grandfather Mansur. Under his guidance Sanskrit books, Greek mathematics and philosophy, science of Euclid and Ptolemy were translated into Arabic. Costa, son of Luke, was appointed for the translation of Greek and Syrian; Yahya bin Harun, of Persian; and Duban the Brahman, of Sanskrit works into Arabic. "It was through the labours of these learned men", says W. Muir, "that the nations of Europe, then shrouded in the darkness of the Middle Ages, became again acquainted with their own proper but forgotten patrimony of Grecian science and philosophy". The Persian language received a great impetus in his hand. An Observatory was established on the plain of Tadmor for the study of astronomy and geometry. Astronomical observations made a great stride during this reign. Abul Hasan invented the telescope from a tube. Poet Abbas, founder of the modern Persian poetry, and al-Kindi, employed at the famous 'Bayt al-Hikmat' established by Mamun in Baghdad, and translator of Greek works, flourished during this period.

Mamun was so much interested in philosophical discussions that he set apart Tuesday fully for the same purpose. The savants and scholars used to attend his chamber regularly and the Khalifah satisfied them with his philosophical conversation. Thus taking all these points into consideration, we can undoubtedly say that the reign of Mamun constitutes the most glorious epoch in Saracenic history and has been justly called the 'Augustan Age of Islam.'

CHAPTER XXV

LATER KHALIFAHS OF THE ABBASIDS

Al-Mu'tasim (833—845 A.D.)

Al-Mu'tasim had for a long time been entertaining the hope of succession and supported by his force he persuaded the ailing Khalifah, al-Mamun, to designate him as his successor. His accession at first met with a serious opposition in the army where a powerful party demanded that Abbas should take the place of his father. But when the Khalifah nominated al-Mu'tasim as his successor to the Khilafat, the whole army accepted him as the future Khalifah. Al-Mu'tasim hastened back to Baghdad, where he made his public entry on the 20th of September, 833 A.D.

His accession

On his accession al-Mu'tasim wanted officers for his bodyguard. He brought all the Turkish slaves and formed a standing army composed of the Turks and other foreigners who proved ultimately fatal to the Khilafat. These Turks were commanded by their own officers and were directly responsible to the Khalifah. But the insolent conduct of the Turkish army at last resulted in the transfer of capital.

Formation
of the
Turkish
soldiers at
Baghdad

The Turkish force kept the women and children in constant jeopardy and affray and murders were the consequences. The Khalifah for the safety of his people quitted the city of Baghdad and established his capital at Samarra in 836 A.D. This policy of Mu'tasim was destined to prove the ruin of his dynasty, for it placed the Khalifahs at the mercy of their practorians.

Change of
capital,
222 A.H.
836 A.D.

Inroad of Zatt insurgents

During this time the Jats of India, who are called Zatt by the Arab historians, appeared on the banks of the Tigris. Mamun had tried in vain to bring them to subjugation. When Mu'tasim came

back to Baghdad, he found the people in great distress. These Jats had cut off their supply of dates from Basrah and thereby threw them into great trouble. The Khalifah resolved to put them down by all means. After seven months of vigorous resistance, they at last yielded on condition of safety of life and property. They were then rehabilitated at the frontiers of Cilicia.

Babek
defeated

Another difficult task lay before the Khalifah—the subjection of Babek. This rebel caused great anxiety in Azerbaijan. The Khalifah being apprised of this rising sent Afshin, one of the ablest Turkish Generals, with a large force. After three years' fighting Babek was taken prisoner. He was carried to Samarra and then delivered to executioners, who cut off his arms and legs. His head was sent to Khurasan and his body was crucified.

War with the Byzantines

Siege of
Amorium

Emperor Theophilus taking advantage of the engagement of the Muslim arms against Babek, with whom the Greeks made common cause, had meanwhile been attacking the Muslim territory and put several hundred Muslims to the sword. Zibatra was burnt to ashes. At this the Khalifah became furious and swore to take exemplary vengeance. He collected a formidable army and inflicted on Theophilus a crushing defeat. He then proceeded to Amorium and took the city where he gained rich plunder. But the information of the plot in his army to kill the Khalifah arrested further advancement.

Revolt in Tabaristan

Revolt in
Tabaristan

The Khalifah had just returned to Samarra when a serious revolt broke out in Tabaristan under the leadership of Maziar. The revolt was suppressed with great difficulty and Maziar was put to death. At the same time, it was discovered that Afshin who stood in the highest favour of the Khalifah, instigated the rebellion in order to found an independent kingdom in the East. He was condemned and put into custody where he ultimately died. Mu'tasim died a year later in January, 842 A.D.

"With Mu'tasim", writes Gibbon, "the eighth of the Abbasids, the glory of his family and nation expired". Maziar executed

Wathiq (223—228 A.H./842—847 A.D.)

Wathiq succeeded to the throne after the death of his father Mu'tasim. He was a good ruler and his government was firm and enlightened. He was a patron of arts and literature. Commerce and industry were encouraged. Though he was fond of mirth, his private life was above reproach. Towards the close of his reign, there was an exchange of prisoners between the Khalifah and the Greek emperor. But he was free from the charge of supporting the Turkish soldiers instead of the Arabs and the Persians, the policy which was adopted by his father.

Exchange
of Greek
prisoners

Wathiq died at an early age. "The only credit given to his short reign of six years was for generosity and benefactions enjoyed especially by the poor of Makkah and Madinah."

Death of
Wathiq

Al-Mutawakkil (233—297 A.H./847—911 A.D.)

As Wathiq had appointed no successor, the chief Qazi, the Vizier and most of the courtiers wanted to support the claim of his son, Muhammad who was still a child but Wassif and Itakh, the Turkish chiefs refused their consent and offered the supreme power to Wathiq's brother Ja'far, who took the name of al-Mutawakkil. His first act on his accession was to put to death his old enemy Ibn al-Zayyat, the vizier, who opposed his election. His possession and the possessions of others who opposed him, were confiscated. His Turkish General to whom he owed his Khilafat, was also put to death for his arrogant conduct. The rationalists were expelled from the offices and the non-Muslims had to suffer from want of employment.

His cruelty

Mutawakkil showed his hatred for the Shi'ites by causing the mausoleum erected over the tomb of Husayn at Karbala together with all buildings surrounding it, to be levelled to the ground and the site to be ploughed up and by forbidding any one to visit the spot.

Hated for
Alids

Wars with
the Byzantines

In the year 237 A.H./851 A.D. a revolt broke out in Armenia. In the following year Bogha, the Turkish General, subdued and pacified the province. In that same year the Byzantines ravaged the coast of Egypt. They destroyed all fortifications at the mouth of the Nile near Tunis and returned with prisoners and booty.

Asia Minor

The annual raids of the Muslims and the Greeks penetrated as far as Amid (Diarbekr) and returned with 10,000 prisoners. But in the year 245 A.H./859 A.D. the Greeks suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Muslims and the fleet of the latter captured and sacked Antalia.

Rebellion
at Hims

In the year 241 A.H./855 A.D. a revolt broke out at Hims. The rebellion was suppressed after a vigorous resistance offered by the rebels.

Foundation
of Ja'fariya

In the year 244 A.H./858 A.D. after holding his Court twelve years at Samarra the Khalifah transferred it to Damascus. But the place did not suit him and he returned to Samarra where he caused magnificent quarters to be built, three miles from the city, which he called after his own name Ja'fariya.

Assassina-
tion of the
Khalifah

The later conduct of the Khalifah invited his own men to terminate his life. It is said that one night while he was sleeping, his favourite Turkish guards entered into his room and in co-operation with his elder son, al-Muntasir, who was displeased with his father for his behaviour, killed him in his bed. His long reign of fifteen years witnessed the disintegration of the empire. His cruelty and carelessness made him unpopular and his extravagance and bigotry which for the time being attracted the attention of the public, ultimately led the empire to ruin.

Unworthy
successor
of Mutawakkil

After the death of Mutawakkil the decline of the empire set in rapidly. The next Khalifahs of this dynasty were unworthy and inefficient and they were unable to take vigorous steps to stem the tide of its rapid dissolution. Moreover, the ascendancy of the Turks helped greatly to hasten the fall of the

empire. The result of this disintegration was the establishment of a number of independent States during the succeeding years.

Growing
power of
the Turks

Successors of al-Mutawakkil

On the very night of his father's assassination Muntasir was proclaimed Khalifah. He was a man of noble character and a mere puppet in the hands of his vizier, Ahmad bin Khasib. He died after a reign of six months.

Muntasir

After the death of Mutasir the Turkoman chiefs raised Musta'in, another grandson of Mu'tasim, to the throne. But the new Khalifah was not given any power or authority. In his reign, the Greeks inflicted serious losses on the Muslims in Asia Minor. The Khalifah finding his position unsafe at the hands of the Turks, escaped to Baghdad and the Turks proclaimed the second son of Mutawakkil as Khalifah under the title of al-Mu'tazz. But within a short time, Mu'tazz was forced to abdicate and after his abdication al-Muhtadi was raised to the throne. He was just and wise and proved himself a capable ruler. He soon came into conflict with the Turks and the ultimate result of it was his abdication.

Musta'in

Al-Mu'tazz

Al-Muhtadi

The eldest son of Mutawakkil was then proclaimed Khalifah under the title of Mu'tamid. He was a weak and pleasure-loving monarch. During his reign, the great power of the Tahirids came to an end. When Yaqub, the Saffarid occupied Nishapur and imprisoned Muhammad bin Tahir with his whole family, his power increased to such an extent that he invaded Iraq but was defeated by Muwaffik, who had the command of the troops. He then retired to his dominion leaving his empire to his brother and successor, Amr. The prince maintained himself in power till the year 287 A.H./900 A.D. when he was beaten and taken prisoner by Ismail bin Ahmad. The Samanids had been the governors of Transoxiana from the time of Mamun and after the fall of the Tahirids were confirmed in this office by the Khalifah. After 900 A.D. they were indepen-

Mu'tamid

End of
Tahirids

Rise of the
Saffarids

The
Samanids

dent princes and under their dominion these districts attained high prosperity. Mu'tamid had to deal with a rising of the Negro slaves in the province of Basrah, led by one 'Ali bin Muhammad who called himself a descendant of 'Ali.

The
Tulunids

In the west, Ahmad bin Tulun became a mighty prince whose sway extended over Syria and a part of Mesopotamia. He was succeeded by his son Khumarwiah in 271 A.H./884. A.D.

Al-Mu'tazid

Mu'tamid was succeeded by Mu'tazid, the son of his brother Muwaffik. Mu'tazid was a good and capable ruler. "He is called Saffah the Second, as he is supposed to have restored the decaying power of the house of Abbas. He took great care of the finance, reformed the administration, was an excellent commander in war, and maintained order as far as possible".

Reforms of
the Law of
Inheritance

Mu'tazid's greatest achievement was the restoration of Egypt to the Khalifat. He reformed the Law of Inheritance by abolishing escheat office and directing that relations in the female line should take after the agnates. He changed the New Year's Day from March to the Syrian month of Huzairan (June.) It was named after him Mu'tazid's New Year's Day.

The Carmathians

Abu Sa'd
al-Jannabi

Fatimid
Mahdi

Muktafi

Almost simultaneously with the rising of the Negro slaves in Basrah, there arose in the province of Kufah a sect of the Carmathians called the Fatimids. This powerful sect remained outwardly quiet during the reign of Mu'tamid but under Mu'tazid the government began to have misgiving about them. Abu Sa'd al-Jannabi who had founded a Carmathian State in Bahrayn, defeated the army sent against him by Mu'tazid in 288 A.H./900 A.D. In the same year the real chief of the sect fled from Salamia in Syria to Africa and hid himself at Sijilmasa in the Far West, whence he reappeared ten years later at Kairowan as the Mahdi, the Khalifah of the Fatimids.

Mu'tazid died in 902 A.D. and was succeeded by his son al-Muktafi. Muktafi was a just and generous ruler but his reign of six years was a period of con-

stant struggle against the Carmathians in Syrian. He successfully drove the Byzantines from Egypt and brought it under his control. After the death of this Khalifah, his brother al-Muqtadir, a boy of thirteen, ascended the throne. The whole administration of the State was practically in the hands of his mother. Taking this opportunity, many of the leading men at Baghdad rebelled and the twenty-four years of his reign were a period of rapid decay. The most important event in his reign was the foundation of the Fatimid dynasty which reigned first in the West and then in the Egypt for nearly three centuries. He was killed in course of a fight with one of his insurgent nobles. After him al-Qahir, son of Mu'tazid, was raised to the throne. He was replaced by a son of Muqtadir named ar-Rizi. He created for him the office of Ameer al-Umara.

Foundation
of the
Fatimids

Al-Qahir

After the death of ar-Rizi another son of al-Muqtadir was proclaimed Khalifah under the name of al-Muttaqi. He was a mere puppet in the hands of Bajkam, the Ameer-al-Umara. But soon after Bajkam died and his death was followed by general anarchy. A certain Baridi marched against Baghdad and made himself master of the capital but was soon driven out.

Al-Muttaqi

But shortly after, he again laid siege to Baghdad and Muttaqi fled to Nasiruddawlah, the Hamadan prince of Mosul, who succeeded in repelling Baridi. Tuzan compelled him to return to Mosul within a short time and Muttaqi now fell into the hands of another rebellion, headed by a Turkish General Tuzan, who placed al-Mustakfi on the throne. Shortly after the accession of Mustakfi, Tuzan died and was succeeded by his secretary, Ja'far bin Shirzad.

Al-Mustakfi

The Buwaihids

On his accession to the throne, al-Mustakfi was pressed hard by the Turks who became all in all in the State from the time of Mutawakkil. In order to free himself from the iron yoke of the Turks, he sought the help of the Buwaihids, who during this time began to press upon Iraq. Khalifah Mustakfi made Ahmad bin Buwaih his Ameer al-Umara and

Rise of the
Buwaihids

when the latter came to Baghdad conferred upon him the title of *Muiz-ud-Dawlah* (he who renders the State mighty). Ahmad's father Abu Shuza Dawlah claimed his descent from the ancient ruling family of Persia. He was the leader of men and had been for some time in the service of the Samanids. His three sons "gradually worked their way southwards, occupying Ispahan, then Shiraz and in the following two years the provinces of Ahwaz and Karman". Shiraz was chosen as capital of the new dynasty. With the entry of Ahmad into Baghdad the Turkish guards fled away but the lot of the Khalifah did not improve under the protection of the new master, the Shi'ite Persian. *Muiz-ud-Dawlah* became so powerful within a short time that he received the title of Sultan, and his name was inscribed on the coinage and recited in the *Khutbah* along with the name of the Khalifah. "His position," says Amcer Ali, "was like that of Charles Martel under the Merovingian kings of France, for he was the virtual sovereign, whilst the Caliph was merely his dependant, receiving a daily allowance of 500 dinars from the public treasury".

Al-Mustakfi was soon tired of his master who became the virtual ruler of the empire. The Khalifah plotted against him and when this conspiracy reached the ears of *Muiz-ud-Dawlah*, he became furious. He deposed and blinded him in 335 A.H./946 A.D. Al-Mu'ti was now raised to the throne. As *Mu'iz-ud-Dawlah* was a Shiah, he established the 10th day of the Muharram as a day of mourning in commemoration of the massacre of Karbala. After his death his son Bakhtyar with the title of Izz-ud-Dawlah succeeded him. Izz-ud-Dawlah was soon deposed by Azad-ud-Dawlah.

Azad-ud-Dawlah (949—983 A.D.)

Azad-ud-Dawlah was born at Ispahan in 936 A.D. While his father Rukn was alive he led an expedition to Iraq where his cousin Bakhtyar was put into difficulties due to the insubordination of his Turkish mercenaries. He rescued his cousin from the danger but threw him into prison and seized his

Muiz-ud-Dawlah was the virtual ruler of the State in the reign of *Mustakfi*.

Al-Mu'ti

Early career

land. His father insisted him on his releasing Bakhtyar and the restoration of his dominion to him. The dispute continued till his cousin was deposed and eventually put to death. He thus became master of Iraq and overlord of his inactive and helpless Khalifah in Baghdad.

Azad-ud-Dawlah was not only the greatest Buwaihid but also one of the illustrious rulers of his time. "Under his sceptre," says Professor Hitti, "he united in 977 A.D. the several petty kingdoms that had risen under Buwaihid rulers in Persia and Iraq, creating an empire approaching in size that of Harun-ar-Rashid". Azad-ud-Dawlah became so powerful that the Khalifah out of fear conferred upon him the title of Sultan. A diploma of investiture as heir-apparent had also been drawn up. But Azad-ud-Dawlah was not content with this and in the following year he demanded of the Khalifah that the drums should be sounded at the gate of the prince's palace three times a day. "The Caliph," says Professor Arnold, "did more than this. He allowed the name of Azad-ud-Dawlah to be inserted in the *Khutbah* and pronounced in mosque on Friday".

Under Azad-ud-Dawlah the Buwaihid power reached the pinnacle of its glory. Before his death in 983 A.D. he had become master of all the lands from the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf and from Ispahan to the borders of Syria. He married the daughter of the Khalifah at-Tai". He was the first Muslim to bear the title of *Shahanshah*. He was a man of great love for justice and truth. He distinguished himself by his charitable deeds and by the favours he lavished on poets and literary men. Himself a famous scholar and a mathematician, he invited the learned men to his court from different parts of the world and took part in their scientific controversies. Abdur Rahman Sufi, one of the famous astronomers of the age, was his intimate friend. While keeping his court in Shiraz, Azad-ud-Dawlah beautified the city of Baghdad, repaired canals and built many mosques, hospitals and public buildings in his dominions. In Baghdad he erected a most

Azad-ud-Dawlah, the greatest of Buwaihids

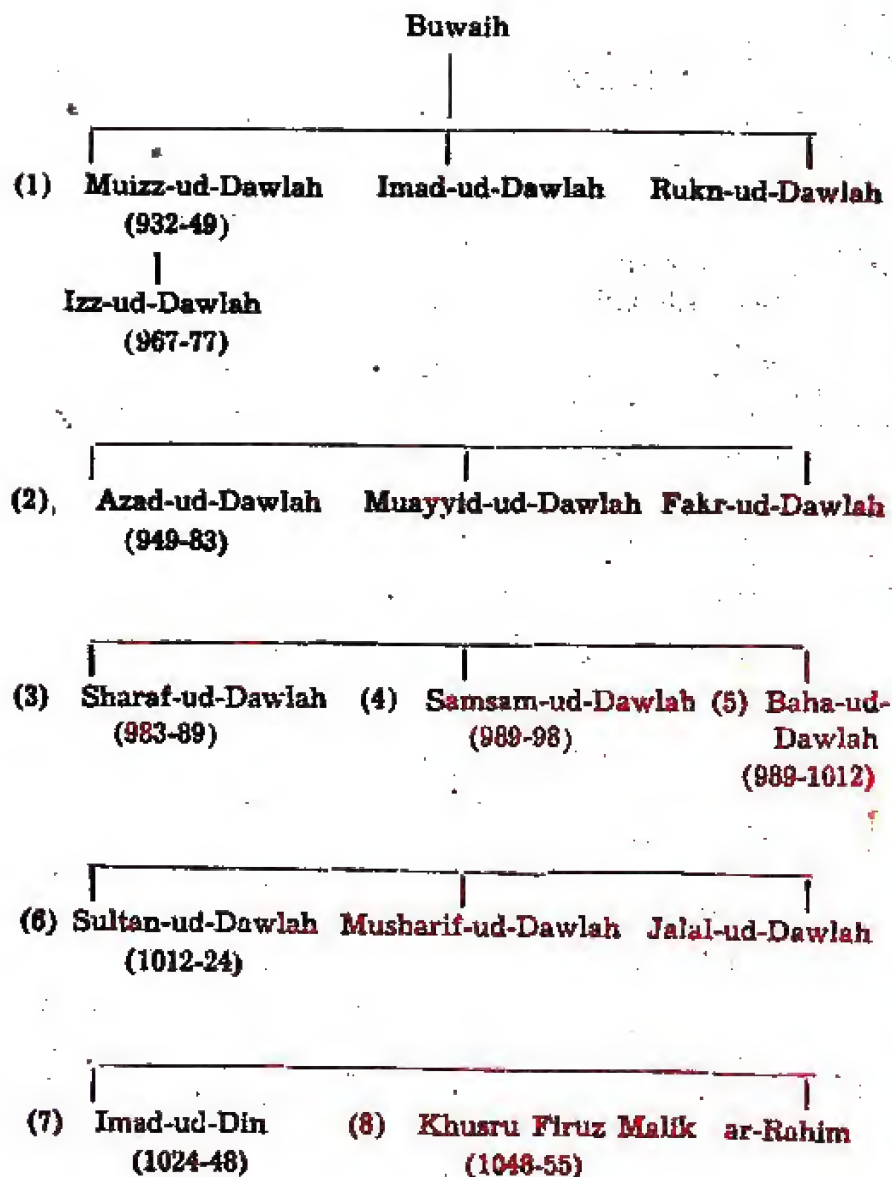
His name read in *Khutbah* on Friday

Buwaihid power reached its zenith under him

Patron of arts and literature

Sharaf-ud-Dawlah and Baha-ud-Dawlah

**GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE
BUWAIHIDS
(932—1055)**



famous hospital named *al-Bimaristan al-Azadi*, the staff of which was twenty-four physicians "who also functioned as medical faculty".

Azad-ud-Dawlah was succeeded by his son Samsam-ud-Dawlah who was soon deposed by his brother Sharaf-ud-Dawlah. Sharaf-ud-Dawlah was a patron of education. He constructed the famous observatory in imitation of al-Mamun. He was followed by his brother Baha-ud-Dawlah who deposed the Khalifah at-Tai' in 991 A.D.

End of the Buwaihids

The Buwaihids dominated the Khilafat for more than a century (945—1055 A.D.). But the wars between the brothers had weakened the empire and a final blow came from Tughril Beg, who entered Baghdad, drove them out from the city and thereby put an end to the Buwaihid rule. Some of the people of this dynasty were no doubt cruel but "on the whole their mayoralty conducted to the prosperity of the people and the cultivation of literature and science".

Achievements of the Buwaihids

Many of the Buwaihid Ameer were patrons of scientists and literary men. Among the distinguished astronomers, physicians and mathematicians who flourished under the Buwaihids the names of al-Kohi and Abu Wafa tower far above the rest. The former wrote a book on the movements of the planets. "His discoveries concerning the summer solstice and the autumnal equinox added materially to the store of human knowledge".* The latter introduced the use of the secant and tangent in trigonometry and astronomical observation. His famous work, *Zijush-Sramil*, is monoument of industry and accurate observation. Sedillot says, "He verified the ancient observations and discovered independently the equation of the centre and evic-tion".

Cultural
progress
under the
Buwaihids

* Ameer Ali, *A Short History of the Saracens*.

The Saljuqs

Rise of the
Saljuqs

The power of the Saljuqs rose on the ruins of the Ghaznavids. The Turks came from the Kirghiz steppes of Turkistan and settled in the region of Bukhara where they embraced Sunnite Islam. They gradually made their way to India. After the discomfiture of Maṣūd, son of Sultan Mahmud, the Saljuqian dynasty was established by Tughril Beg.

Tughril Beg (1037-63 A.D.)

Title of
Sultan

Tughril Beg was regarded as a wise ruler. He was simple and generous and devoted his time to the pursuit of knowledge. He brought under his control Persian Iraq, Jorīan, Khawarizm and other important provinces to the West and drove out the last Buwaihid (1055 A.D.) from Baghdad. The Abbasid Khalifah Qaim sought the assistance of Tughril at the critical juncture of his throne. Tughril readily responded to his call. The Khalifah, out of love and gratitude, conferred on him the title of Sultan.

Alp Arslan (1063—72 A.D.)

Battle of
Malaz
Kard

Peace
treaty

Character

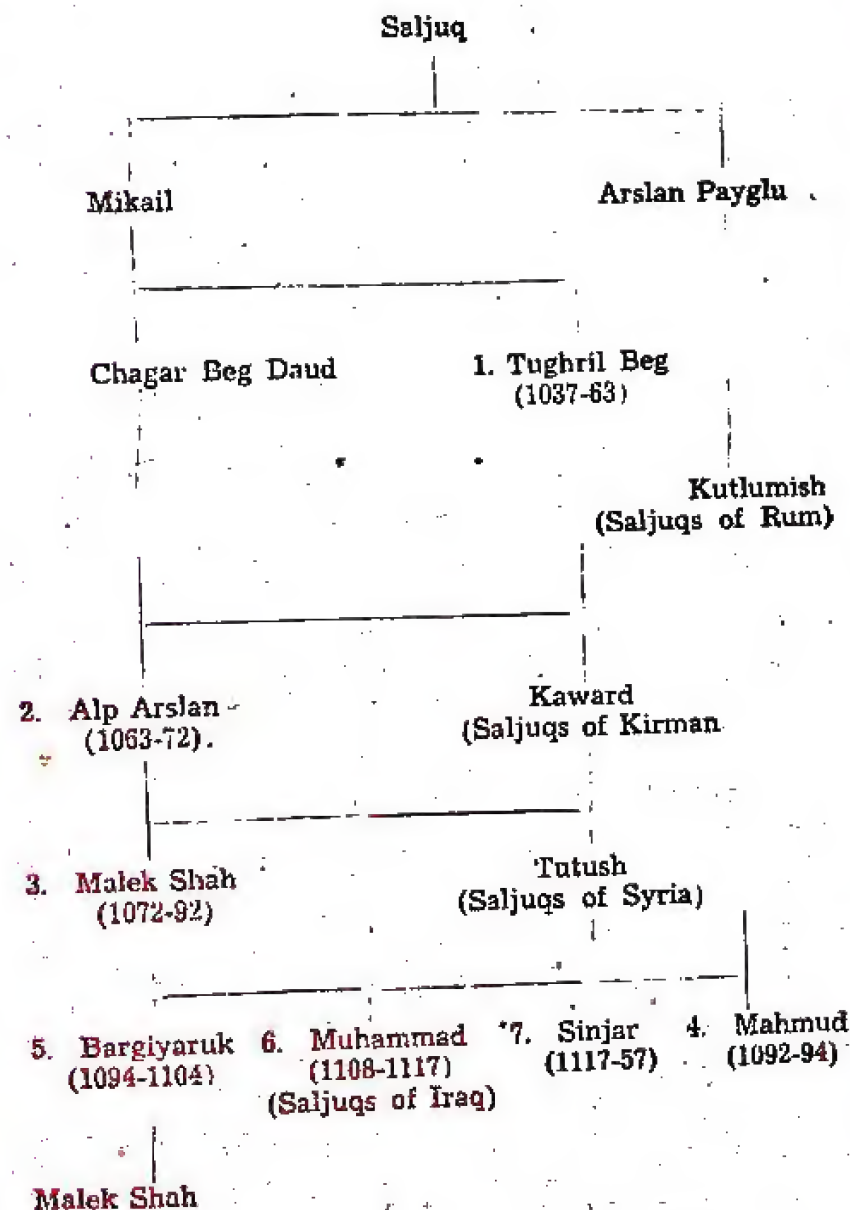
Under Tughril the Saljuqs became the prominent nation in Asia. He was succeeded by his nephew Alp Arslan. In the year following his accession, Alp Arslan captured the capital of Armenia. At the same time he was informed that the Romans had entered into Asia Minor with a large force. At the battle of Malaz Kard the Muslims inflicted a crushing defeat on the Roman army. A treaty of peace was concluded between Alp Arslan and Romanus by which the latter agreed to marry his daughters to the sons of the former. But Romanus was killed on his way to Constantipole. The newly conquered province was bestowed upon Sulayman who held it on behalf of the Sultan.

Alp Arslan is described by Ibn al-Athir "as a noble, benevolent, just and wise ruler". He died in 466 A.H./1037 A.D.

Malek Shah (466-485 A.H./1072-1092 A.D.)

Alp Arslan was succeeded by his son Malek Shah. During this time Khalifah Qaim died and

GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE SALJUQS (1037-1157)



was succeeded by his grandson al-Muqtadi. The reign of Malek Shah opened a new era in the history of the Saljuqs, nay of the history of the Islamic world in Asia. The beginning of his reign was disturbed by some risings, one headed by his own brother who was ultimately defeated.

Throughout the reign of Malek Shah, Nizam al-Mulk who has been described by Prof. Hitti "as one of the ornaments of the political history of Islam" piloted the ship of the State in the name of the Sultan with single success, while the latter "had nothing to do but sit on the throne or enjoy the chess." Nizam al-Mulk was the premier of the State and was invested with the title of Atabek for his valuable services to the State. "Nizam al-Mulk was probably", says Ameer Ali, "after Yahya Barmaki the able minister and administrator Asia has ever produced. His work on administration and government forms an enduring monument of his genius and capacity".

Peace and prosperity prevailed throughout the dominions of the Sultan "which extended from the confines of China to the Mediterranean on the West, from Georgia on the North to Yaman in the South". Nizam al-Mulk took extensive tours in the empire to know the condition of the people and tried to help them to the best of his capacity. He established resting-palaces for the protection of merchants and travellers, built roads, mosques and hospitals for the subjects. In the words of historians Malek Shah's reign in its grandeur and magnificence, and in the prosperity of the people, rivalled the best period of Roman or Arabian domination. Commerce and industry were encouraged, arts and literature were patronized. Nizam al-Mulk was himself a learned man and wrote a famous treatise on the art of government, the *Siyasat Namah*. The world renowned Nizamiyah Madrasah founded by him at Baghdad in 1065—1067 A.D. will speak highly of him as a patron of learning and the learned. The famous philosopher al-Ghazali was a teacher of this institution. The court of Malek Shah was adorned by a galaxy of brilliant scholars of whom Umar Khayyam was the promi-

Nizamiyah
Madrasah

nent. Malek Shah summoned a conference of astronomers in 468 A.H./1075 A.D. at the instance of Nizam al-Mulk to reform the Persian Calendar, at his newly erected observatory. The result of this assemblage of astronomers was the 'Jalali Calendar' after the name of the Sultan.

'Jalali
Calendar'

Towards the close of Malek Shah's reign 'the Assassins made their appearance in Mazendran'. The founder of this sect was Hasan ibn Sabbah who was passed into history as the "Old Man of the Mountain" or as the Chief of the Assassins. He claimed his descent from the Himyarite kings of South Arabia. He started life as a mace-bearer to Sultan Alp Arslan, the Saljuqian monarch, but in consequence of a quarrel, he retired to his native country, ar-Ray and then passed into Syria where he entered into the service of a Chief of the Ismailites, the tenets of which he eventually adopted and became the champion of the Ismailite doctrine, in the East.

Hasan ibn
Sabbah

In 1090 A.D. he obtained possession of the Castle Alamut, north-west of Qazwin and he at once made this citadel his capital. From Alamut he "with his disciples made surprise raids in various directions. In pursuit of their ends they made free and treacherous use of the dagger, reducing assassination to an art". Major Osborn, a famous historian, says that for the purpose of winning proselytes, Hasan created a hierarchy of seven grades which spread themselves through all Asia, doing the work of missionaries.

Assassins
used
dagger to
attain
their ends

Of the seven grades, the one with which history is chiefly concerned is that of the Devotees. These were 'the Assassins'. They were young men, selected on account of their 'physical strength and courage'. The whole object of their training was to inspire them with a spirit of absolute submission to Grand Master, founded upon a conviction of his divine authority. Hasan ibn Sabbah, who was the Grand Master, watched the world, himself invisible, and whenever he perceived a formidable foe, caused a dagger to be driven into his heart. He spared

Absolute
submission
to the leader
was the basic
training of
the
Assassins

neither warriors nor statesmen. But during the latter part of his life he became a pious Muslim and enforced among his followers the rigid adherence to the letter of the Quran.

Hasan ibn Sabbah was succeeded by his son, Buzurg Umaid, who reigned for 24 years. After his death his son Ka'aya Muhammad took the charge and exercised sovereignty for 25 years. The last of the race was Ruknuddin, better known as Qahir Shah, who was made prisoner by Halagu, the Tartar king. Several attempts were made by the Khalifahs to crush the power of the Assassins, but all proved a failure until the invasion of Halagu who "destroyed the Caliphate, seized the fortress in 1256 together with its subsidiary castles in Persia". Thus this sect (Assassins) passed out of history.

Malek Shah sent two expeditions against the Assassins but death overtook him before he could make an end of the Assassins (1092 A.D.).

With the death of Malek Shah the power of the Saljuqs began to decline and they could never rise again in the Eastern horizon. The successors of Malek Shah rose in power but they were involved in a civil war which ultimately led them to ruin.

It was at this period that the war of the Crusades was fast spreading over Western Asia. But neither the Saljuqs nor the Abbasids took any interest in it.

The Crusades (490—656 A.H./1096—1258 A.D.)

Since the establishment of the Islamic power the Christians had enjoyed all sorts of privileges and facilities. They were given the liberty of religion, and the public offices were open to them equally with the Muslims. The Muslims regarded Jerusalem as a sacred city and when Palestine and Syria came under the sway of the Fatimids of Egypt, the Christians enjoyed more privileges than the Sunni Muslims. The Egyptian ruler encouraged the Christian trade and commerce and patronized the Christians. But all these privileges and toleration could not conciliate the Christians, "who looked upon the presence of the Muslims in Jerusalem as an abomination".

Power of
the Assassins
destroyed

Decline of
the Saljuq
power

Condition
of the
Christians
under the
Muslims

Causes of the Crusades

The military expeditions which were sent by the Christians against the Muslims during the period, 1096 to 1273 A.D. are generally called the Crusades. It is so called because they were inspired by religious fanaticism. But the movement was not only inspired by spiritual motive but also by personal interest. The following were the causes which precipitated the Crusades.

Firstly, the Crusades were the outcome of the long conflict between the eastern and western churches, i.e., between the Muslims and the Christians for supremacy over each other. This conflict even before the Crusades had something of the nature of a crusade. In the 11th century arms of the western Christians were directed against Islam, because the rapid rise of the latter "sent a thrill of horror throughout Christian Europe."

Conflict
between
the East
and West
for supremacy
over
each other

Secondly, the pilgrimaging zeal of the Christians constituted another factor for the Crusades. In the 11th century the zeal of the Christians for performing pilgrimage of Jerusalem became more ardent than ever. At the same time, Jerusalem or Palestine came under the control of the Turks and the Christian pilgrims began to pour into the Holy Land. But they were occasionally exposed to the ill-treatment and robbery as we see to-day in the case of the Muslim pilgrims. This ill-treatment was exaggerated by the pilgrims throughout Europe and the whole of the Christian world was set ablaze.

Pilgrima-
ging zeal
of the
Christians

Thirdly, it was the time of feudal anarchy in Europe. Lords and princes were engaged in constant warfare against one another. The institutions of chivalry and knighthood had transformed the Christian population into so many military bands. The Christians and the Pope made a convenient use of martial spirit. In order to divert the attention of the nobles and lords from mutual warfare, they inspired them to do the meritorious act of fighting against the Muslims for the recovery of the Holy City.

Martial
spirit of
the age
directed
against the
Muslims

Commercial interest in the Mediterranean Sea

Fourthly, the Muslims became the master of the Mediterranean Sea from the 10th century onward. Trade and commerce in the Mediterranean Sea was fully controlled by them. The merchants of other nations especially Pisa, Venice and Genoa had commercial interest in the Sea, but the way was blocked against them. Hence the commercial interest played an important part in the Crusades.

Appeal of Alexius Comnenus to Pope Urban II was the immediate cause

Lastly, the appeal of Alexius Comnenus whose Asiatic possessions had been overrun by the Saljuqs, to Pope Urban II and the organising activity of the latter constituted the immediate cause of the Crusades. Pope Urban II summoned a council on November 26, 1095 at Clermont in south-eastern France and urged the faithful to wage war against the Muslims. His aim during that time was to bring the Greek church under his sway. He promised a remission of sins to those who joined it and paradise to those who fell in battle. The rallying cry united the Christian world under the banner of Pope Urban II. Within a short time a hundred and fifty thousand men, mostly Franks and Normans, had answered the call and met at Constantinople.

Course of Crusades

Peter the Hermit

The first arms of the Crusades led by Walter the Penniless started in 490 A.H./1096 A.D. But it was defeated by the Christian Bulgarians. Peter the Hermit led the second army and marched through Hungary and Bulgaria and swept everything before them. The Sultan of Nice attacked them and their leader Reginald embraced Islam with some of his companions and the rest were put to the sword.

In the year 491 A.H./1097 A.D. the Christians under the leadership of Godfrey of Bouillon crossed the Bosphorus and after a siege of nine months conquered Antioch. Cruelty, plunder and inhuman deeds were perpetrated during this time.

Siege of Antioch

After the fall of Antioch the Crusaders proceeded to Mirrat-un-Noman, a flourishing city of Syria. Here also thousands of people were massacred mercilessly. From this place they marched upon Jerusalem which they captured easily. On the capture

of the Holy City followed the massacre of the Muslims. "Heaps of heads and hands and feet were to be seen throughout the streets and squares of the city". History has hardly witnessed such a horrible spectacle but yet "no heart melted into compassion or expanded into benevolence". Godfrey was made king of Jerusalem. His brother Baldwin succeeded him a year later. He was a capable, energetic and aggressive leader. In the year 503 A.H./1109 A.D. the Crusaders captured and sacked Tripoli, and the people of this place were put to the sword and the library, college and manufactory were reduced to ashes.

Massacre at Mirrat-un-Noman

Capture of Jerusalem and massacre by the Crusaders

Sack of Tripoli

During this time the Saljuqid empire was in a state of disorder. The discord among the Sultans enabled the Crusaders to establish themselves in the land of Islam. But at the instance of Sultan Muhammad the chiefs of the country forgot their differences and joined hands to oppose the invaders. So when Baldwin, the king of Jerusalem, invaded Damascus he was defeated and driven out by the combined forces of the Muslims and the Sultan of Rome. But the whole of Europe was behind him. Thus being reinforced from Europe, Baldwin was able to recover the lost ground.

Damascus invaded

Imaduddin Zangi (1123—1146 A.D.)

On the death of Sultan Mahmud there arose a prominent man who played an important role in the history of Crusades. He not only opposed the "shock of the Franks but drove them inch by inch from their possessions". He was Imaduddin Zangi, son of one of the chiefs of Sultan Malek Shah. Imaduddin Zangi was a man of strong ability and personality. He obtained the city of Wasit from Sultan Mahmud. The Government of Mosul and Upper Mesopotamia was also imposed on him later on. He received the title of Atabek from the Khalifah of Baghlat. He devoted himself to the task of improving the Government and organizing the army before he took the field. On the invitation of the people of Aleppo and Hamah who had suffered terribly at the hands of

Zangi received the title of Atabek

Occupation of Aleppo

the Crusaders, Zangi took possessions of Aleppo and Hamah. In the next year he drove the Crusaders from al-Asarib. Thus the power and influence of Zangi began to increase till he became the victor of Edessa.

Buzza
attacked

Capture of
Balbek

In the meantime the Greeks in co-operation with the Franks attacked and captured Buzza and put to the sword all the male members and carried into captivity the women and children. They then marched upon Caesarea. The lord of this place was Abu Asakir who appealed to Zangi for help. Imaduddin Zangi responded to this call and with the appearance of Zangi the Franks and the Greeks retreated hastily. The fortress of Arka was razed to the ground and Balbek was captured and placed under the command of Najmuddin, father of Salahuddin, a famous warrior of the Crusades.

Conquest of Edessa

Zangi
murdered

The greatest conquest of Zangi was the capture of Edessa in 539 A.H./1144 A.D. Edessa was considered by the Christians "as one of the noblest cities, for it formed one of his bishoprics". The city was taken by storm. But Zangi did not persecute the inhabitants of the city like the Christians. None felt the weight of his sword save and except the fighting men and the monks and priests who excited the Frankish soldiers. But while he was engaged in the siege of Kalat-Jabir, he was murdered by a soldier of his own. Thus ended the life of one of the greatest heroes of the age. He was a true patriot who fought for his motherland at her critical moment. It was due to his courage and capacity that the prestige and honour of the Muslims were saved and it was he who first checked the advance of the Crusaders. He revived agriculture and restored peace and prosperity to the country. His door was open to the poor and the needy. The country found in him a sincere and worthy friend "who loved the back of a saddle better than a silken bed, the din of battle better than the most enchanting music, the clash of arms more than the blandishments of sweet-heart".

Nuruddin Mahmud (541—570 A.H./1146—1174 A.D.)

Imaduddin Zangi was succeeded by his illustrious son, Nuruddin Mahmud. Mahmud was not only a soldier but a jurist and scholar as well. Just after his accession to the throne of Aleppo, the Christians of Edessa helped by the Franks rose against the garrison and massacred the Muslim soldiers in the city. No sooner had Nuruddin Mahmud heard the news of the fall of Edessa than he marched upon the city and captured it. The soldiers and traitors were put to the sword and the Armenians who joined with the Crusaders were expelled from the country.

Edessa
captured
by
Nuruddin

The Second Crusade

The fall of Edessa created a great tension all over Europe. St. Bernard "preached a fresh Crusade against Islam". His preachings thus opened the Second Crusade in European history. In response to holy war, Conrad III, emperor of Germany, and Louis VII with a large force marched upon Asia. But both the sovereigns lost large portions of their armies on their march towards Syria. With the remaining army they arrived at Antioch and from this place they proceeded to Damascus. The siege of Damascus continued for several months when Nuruddin with his elder brother appeared before the besieging army. The Crusaders retreated hurriedly towards Palestine and Conrad and Louis returned to Europe. Thus the Second Crusade came to a close.

End of the
Second
Crusade

Nuruddin now began a career of conquest. He captured the Castle of al-Aareima and a few months later inflicted on the Crusaders a crushing defeat at Zaghra. He also captured the fortress of Apameas in the year 544 A.H./1149 A.D. The capture of Joscelyn after a reverse facilitated the task of Nuruddin who was able to reduce to subjection a number of cities belonging to the Crusaders. But he was not satisfied with these. He fully realized that so long as Damascus was held by the independent prince, it would be difficult for him to succeed against

Capture of
Apameas

Possession
of Damas-
cus

the Crusaders. So, when the people of Damascus appealed to him for help against their ruler, he did not fail to avail himself of the opportunity and in no time he took possession of Damascus. The conquest of Damascus gave him the title, *al-Malek-ul-Aadil*.

Expedition of Egypt

After six years when Shawer, a minister of the Fatimid Khalifah, being ousted from office by a cabal, sought help of Nuruddin, the latter readily responded to his prayer and sent his famous General Shirkuh. But Shawer, being restored to his power, stood against Shirkuh in co-operation with the Franks and forced him to evacuate Egypt.

Shirkuh
forced to
evacuate

In the year 563 A.H./1167 A.D. Shirkuh again entered Egypt and Shawer sought the help of Amaury, the king of Jerusalem. The latter with a view to occupying the country, sent an army to the help of Shawer. But the combined force was totally defeated in the battle of Balbain and a treaty was concluded by which Shirkuh agreed to return to Damascus on receiving 50,000 pieces of gold and Amaury was to withdraw his troops from Egypt. But the latter did not leave Cairo and thereby broke the terms of the treaty. Moreover, they began to oppress the people and when their tyranny exceeded its limit, the Khalifah himself appealed to Nuruddin for help. Nuruddin again sent his General, Shirkuh, to Egypt. On the approach of Shirkuh the Crusaders left the country. Shirkuh was well received by the people of Egypt and their Khalifah. He was ultimately appointed prime minister. Shawer was put to death. But Shirkuh could not enjoy his post long. He died two months later and was succeeded by his nephew Salahuddin. When the life of the last Fatimid Khalifah was drawing to a close, Salahuddin restored in Egypt the spiritual authority of the Abbasid Khalifah, and after the death of the Fatimid Khalifah, he became the virtual ruler of Egypt.

Shirkuh
appointed
prime
minister
of Egypt

Advent of
Salahuddin

Salahuddin (570—590 A.H./1174—1193 A.D.)

Salahuddin was born at Takrit in 432 A.H./1137 A.D. His father Najmuddin Ayyub was a trusted officer of Zangi as well as of Nuruddin. Salahuddin's youth was entirely undistinguished and up to the age of twenty-five he remained a completely obscure individual. After that a complete change came over his career and he proved himself worthy of his task.

Early
career

During the later part of Nuruddin's reign, Salahuddin was a distinguished lieutenant and after the death of his patron and master he consolidated his independent authority over the whole of Egypt, part of Nubia, Hijaz and Yaman. Nuruddin was succeeded by his minor son Malek Shah. The minority of Malek Shah encouraged the Ameer to rise in power and thus the internal dispute of the empire invited the crusaders to attack Damascus. The siege of Damascus continued till Salahuddin came to its rescue. But the young king Malek Shah, instigated by Gumushtagin, did not look upon him with friendly eyes. On the contrary, he instigated the people to rise against this man. Salahuddin was then forced to declare war against the people of Aleppo. The troops of Aleppo were defeated, and finding no other way Malek Shah appealed to the Crusaders for help. The latter laid siege to Edessa but on the approach of Salahuddin raised the siege. He cut off all oppositions and paved the way for his future work. He was invested by this time with the title of Sultan.

Lieutenant
of Nurud-
din

Malek
Shah
succeeds
Nuruddin

Capture of
Damascus

Salahuddin
invested
with the
title of
Sultan

The year of 1181 A.D. (577 A.H.) saw the death of Malek Shah. He was succeeded by his cousin Izz-uddin. Izz-uddin soon gave the principality of Aleppo to his brother Imaduddin who acknowledged the suzerainty of Salahuddin. By the end of 1182 A.D. (578 A.H.) the power of Salahuddin was recognized by the whole of Western Asia.

Death of
Malek
Shah

After the death of Amaury, his son Baldwin IV succeeded him. During the reign of this ruler, a truce was concluded between the Muslims and the Christians. But in the year 582 A.H./1186 A.D., Reginald, the ruler of Kara, violated the treaty by

Breach of
the treaty
by the
Franks

Battle of
Hittin,
1187 A.D.

Capture of
Tiberiade

Capitula-
tion of
Jerusalem

The hu-
manity of
Salahuddin

attacking the Muslim caravan passing by his castle and thereby incurred the displeasure of the Muslims. Salahuddin, on knowing this, demanded compensation for the breach of truce and when it was refused he laid siege to Kara and sent a force under 'Ali towards Galilee to watch the Franks. The Christians being apprised of the siege of Kara, marched against him. By the 3rd of July, 1187 A.D., both the armies met at a place named Hittin, where a hotly contested battle was fought in which the Christians were defeated. Ten thousand soldiers died in the battle and the prominent leaders were taken prisoner. The Sultan then captured the castle of Tiberiade. Acre also came under his possession after a short resistance. Thus Naplus, Jericho, Ramla, Caesarea, Arsuf, Jaffa, Beyrut and a number of other cities fell one by one into the hands of Salahuddin.

Salahuddin then turned his attention towards Jerusalem where millions of people were massacred by the Christians. He marched upon the Holy City and reaching the destination asked the inhabitants to surrender. But on their refusal he made a vow to take revenge of the massacre on the Muslims committed by the soldiers of Godfrey. A short while after Jerusalem was besieged, the Crusaders lost heart and appealed to the Sultan for mercy "in the name of common father of mankind". His heart was softened and he could not fulfil his vow of revenge. He allowed the Greeks and Syrian Christians to live within Jerusalem in the full enjoyment of their civil rights. The Franks and the Latins were permitted to live in Palestine as they expressed their will. Their ransom was fixed at the rate of 10 dinars for every female and 1 for each child, failing which they were to remain in bondage. But this was not strictly carried out. The Sultan himself allowed several thousand people out of kindness to go without ransom. He also paid the ransom of ten thousand people and his brother released seven thousand more. He also distributed a huge sum of money among the poor and the needy Christians for their journey expenses. He knew how the Muslims had been butchered indiscriminately by the

Christians, yet his magnanimous heart did not take any revenge on the Christians. On the other hand he established a brotherhood between the Christians and the Muslims by allowing the former to enjoy equal rights with the Muslims in Jerusalem and thereby attracted the attention of the Christians of other countries who were eager to come to his dominion. Mill says, "Many of the Christians who left Jerusalem, went to Antioch but Bohemond not only denied them hospitality but even striped them. They marched into the Saracenic country and were well received". Thus his treatment towards the Christians was unparalleled in the history of the world when oppression and torture, cruelty and massacre were the order of Christendom.

His treat-
ment to the
Christians

The fall of Jerusalem threw Christendom into great commotion and the Crusaders inspired and induced the sovereign and princes of Europe to embark on another Crusade. Thousands of Christians again poured into Tyre to recover the lost prestige. In response to the crying call of the ecclesiastics, Frederick Barbarossa, the Emperor of Germany, Philip Augustus and Richard, kings of France and England respectively, came to join the Crusade.

The Third
Crusade

A famous historian says in this connection that the Franks came from all directions by land and by sea with all their forces. Even women equipped themselves for the war. When they were all united at Tyre, they marched upon Acre and laid siege to it.

Siege of
Acre

When Salahuddin was informed of their movement, he hit upon a plan to attack them *en route*, but was persuaded by his Ameers to attack them on the open ground before Acre. Here he made a great mistake by pursuing the policy of the Ameers. "Had", says the historian, "Salahuddin acted according to his own opinion and attacked the Franks before they had taken up position before Acre, he would have saved the city". By the 14th September, 1189 A.D., Salahuddin attacked the Crusaders. His nephew Taqiuddin drove the Crusaders from their position and restored communication with

Surrender
of Acre

Arrival of
Richard
and Philip
Augustus

Butchery
on the
Muslims

Marched
upon
Ascalon

Peace con-
cluded

End of the
Third
Crusade,
1192 A.D.

Acre. Ibn al-Athir says, "Had the Muslims continued the fight up to the night, they would have completely attained their object, but after gaining half the position of the Franks, they rested to resume the battle next day". The siege of Acre continued nearly for two years. The Muslims in spite of hardship and troubles throughout this period did not lose their heart, but all attempts of resistance were frustrated when Richard and Philip Augustus came in person with overwhelming forces. The Sultan now being tired of war, pestilence and famine, began to feel the weight of the Crusaders and Mashtub, the commandant of the city, at last asked Philip Augustus for the same conditions that the Muslims accorded to the Christians during the capture of Jerusalem. But the ungrateful king of England did not show any mercy to the Muslims and "butchered them in cold blood within sight of their brethren".

On the fall of Acre the Crusaders marched upon Ascalon under the command of Richard. Salahuddin in the meantime directed his operation and reached Ascalon. When Richard arrived, he found that the city was surrounded by man of 'indomitable will and unceasing energy'. He, being unable to seize the city, sent messengers to Salahuddin for peace. The Sultan after a hot deal of discussion and negotiations with the Christians, agreed to the proposal for peace. "A peace was at last established between the Muslims and the Christians and declaring that the territories of both should equally enjoy repose and security and that persons of either nation might go into the territory of the other and return again without molestation or fear". Thus ended the Third Crusade.

After the departure of Richard, Salahuddin remained for a while at Jerusalem. He then returned to Damascus where he passed the rest of his life. The exhaustion of the long campaign had enfeebled his robust health and fever carried him off six months after the peace (1193 A.D.). "The day of his death", says a writer, "was for Islam and the Muslims a misfortune such as they never suffered

since they were deprived of the first four Caliphs. The palace, the empire and the world were overwhelmed with grief, the whole city was plunged in sorrow and followed his bier weeping and crying". Magnanimous, chivalrous, gentle, sympathetic, pure in heart and life, ascetic and laborious, simple in his habits, fervently devout and only severe in his zeal for the faith, he has been rightly called one of the greatest and most chivalrous monarchs the world has ever produced.

Salahuddin was not only a warrior but also a great patron of learning and arts. Many distinguished men of letters adorned his court. The most prominent of them were the Katib Imaduddin and the jurist al-Hakkari. The Sultan established schools, colleges and hospitals in his dominion.

Two years after the death of Salahuddin the Fourth Crusade was opened at the instance of Pope Celestine III. But in reality the conflict between the Muslims and the Christians had ended with the Third Crusade. So, the next struggles between Islam and Christendom were not so worthy of note. In the year 1195 A.D. the Crusaders captured Sicily and two expeditions were sent towards Syria. The Christians landed on the Phoenician coast and siezed Beirut. At this the son of Salahuddin named Aadil hastened to resist the Crusaders. He attacked Jaffa whilst the Crusaders laid siege to Tibnin but ultimately they were forced to raise the seige and to sue for peace. A treaty was concluded in the year 595 A.H./1198 A.D. on condition that the war should be suspended for three years.

Three years had not elapsed when Innocent III declared the Fifth Crusade and invited men to join it. Richard of England vehemently refused to join the Crusade but the other princes of Europe gladly accepted the invitation to participate in the war. Luckily for the Muslims they, instead of marching against Syria, turned their arms against Constantinople. When the Christians took the city, they put every Greek male and female to the sword. Butchery, cruelty and plundering went on simultaneously for a few days.

Death of
Salahuddin

His
character

Patron of
learning
and arts

The Fourth
Crusade

Siege of
Tibnin

Treaty of
three
years

The Fifth
Crusade

Siege of
Damietta

Defeat of
the Frank

Possession of
Jerusalem

Jerusalem
retaken in
1239 A.D.

In the year 613 A.H./1216 A.D. Innocent III preached the Sixth Crusade. Two hundred and fifty thousand men, chiefly Germans, landed in Syria and after devastating the portions of the sea coast, they proceeded to Egypt and laid siege to Damietta. Out of seventy thousand men only three thousand remained to tell the tale of their sufferings. The Franks now marched upon Cairo, but by the incessant attack of the Muslims they were compelled to sue for peace. A treaty was concluded by which the Crusaders agreed to leave Damietta.

The internal dispute of the Sultans led Kamil to make a treaty with Frederick of Germany by which the later obtained the possession of Jerusalem.

In the year 636 A.H./1238 A.D., Gregory IX proclaimed another Crusade. During the same year Kamil died. The Christians arrived at Palestine by violating the treaty made between the Christians and Kamil in the year 637 A.H./1239 A.D. A son of Kamil, Abu Nasar Daud by name, defeated the Christians and re-occupied Jerusalem.

In the year 642 A.H./1244 A.D. the troops of Muhammad Khwarizm, driven by Chengis Khan, came to Syria and plunged it into disorder. After a series of battles they were discomfited by Malek as-Saleh Ayyub. Whilst the latter was engaged in Syria, the Christians launched the Eighth Crusade under the leadership of Louis IX of France. But when Louis reached Egypt, he was defeated and taken prisoner by Turan Shah, son of Ayyub. A treaty was concluded by which Louis was set free.

After the Eighth Crusade, the Franks made attempts to regain their lost possessions but all their efforts ended in failure.

Results of the Crusades

The Crusades had important results in the history of the world. It was the Crusades which brought Europe into close contact with the Muslim

world and thus the relationship between the East and the West was established. This contact led to exchange of ideas between the two countries. The knowledge of the progressive and advanced people of the East gave impetus to the intellectual growth of Western Europe. It played an important part in bringing about renaissance in Europe.

Contact
between
the East
and the
West

The Crusades promoted the interest of Europe in the field of trade and commerce. Previously, the West had no idea of the East. As a result of the Crusades, the Europeans learnt some important arts and inventions, such as the Mariner's Compass, the Windmill, etc. from the Muslims. They also came to know the advanced method of agriculture and the more developed industrial life of the East. When they went back to Europe, they established a market in their country for the eastern goods. The western people began to realise the necessity of the eastern goods and out of this necessity there grew up the development of commercial activity between the East and the West. The commercial activity further led to the development of maritime activity in the Mediterranean. But the Muslims who once controlled the Mediterranean Sea lost their supremacy, while the Europeans were freely using the sea route across the Mediterranean.

The
Crusades
promoted
the com-
mercial
interest of
Europe

With the
develop-
ment of
com-
mercial
activity the
Muslims
lost supre-
macy over
the Medi-
terranean

Fall of the Abbasid Dynasty

Throughout the period of the Crusades the Muslim generals and soldiers showed the extremest sympathy and kindness, patience and perseverance, forgiveness and gentleness, and above all, the chivalrous spirit. During this time the Khalifahs of Baghdad were involved in their internal struggle. When their country was threatened by the Crusaders, they paid no heed to it. They were passing their days idly and extravagantly. This mode of life continued till the capture of Baghdad by Halagu, a grandson of Chengiz Khan, who devastated the city and killed al-Musta'sim, the last Khalifah of the Abbasid dynasty in 1258 A.D. Thus the long reign of the Abbasid dynasty came to an end.

Invasion of
Halagu

Causes of the Fall of the Abbasid Dynasty

To trace the causes of the downfall of the Abbasid dynasty is to recount the doings of the Khalifahs. Most of the later Khalifahs of this dynasty led pompous and luxurious life and cared little for the State. Instead of making any attempt to uplift the condition of the subjects and to improve the Government, they devoted their valuable time to wine, women and music. Moreover, they lost the vigour and energy to hold the sceptre as their blood became diluted with that of the conquered.

Negligence of State affairs and moral degradation of later Khalifahs

The supremacy of the Turks in the later period was one of the causes of the fall of the empire. After the death of Mutawakkil the power of the Turks began to increase rapidly and the successors of Mutawakkil could not resist it. The Arabs and the Persians became disgusted with their high handed policy. The result of this alienation was the establishment of a number of independent States which proved fatal to the empire.

Supremacy of the Turks and rise of the independent States

The negligence of the military department under the later Khalifahs greatly contributed to the downfall of the Abbasids. The success and stability of the empire depends on military strength. But as there was no question of expansion during this period, the later Khalifahs gave no importance to this essential department. The effect was that the soldiers lost their martial spirit and when the country was attacked by foreigners, they could not cope with the enemy.

Military power neglected by the later Khalifahs

The relation between the Provincial and the Central Governments was not cordial. In many cases the Provincial Governors endeavoured to defy the authority of the Centre and declared their independence. Thus they created disturbance in the empire and often embarrassed the Centre.

Absence of cordial relation between Provincial and Central Governments

Racial enmity was one of the prime factors in the overthrow of the Abbasid dynasty. The struggle between the Arabs and non-Arabs, between the Muslims and non-Muslims was going on in full swing during this period. The Iranians who were

Racial enmity

favoured by the Abbasids despised the Arabs and the Arabs despised the Iranians and others. The non-Arabs began to rally round the Iranians and to oppose the rise of the Arabs in every possible way. But the Khalifahs could not unite these people under one banner. The consequence was the division of the Muslims into several sects and thus the disintegration of the empire set in slowly but steadily.

Among several factors that led to the downfall of the empire, the economic factors were no less important. The imposition of taxes for the interest of the ruling class discouraged farming and industry and the constant bloody strifes left many a piece of cultivated land desolate and forlorn. The flood in Mesopotamia made the people hopeless and homeless. Beside this, "famine and epidemic decimated the population in many provinces."

Economic factors

To these causes of decay must be added the invasion of Halagu, a grandson of Chengiz Khan, who devastated the city of Baghdad on such a scale that "for three years the streets ran with blood and the water of the Tigris was dyed red for miles along the course". He killed the last Khalifah of the dynasty and massacred his family so much so that "for the first time in its history the Muslim world was left without a Khalifah whose name could be cited in the Friday prayers."

Invasion of Halagu

CHAPTER XXVI

ADMINISTRATION, SOCIETY AND CULTURE
UNDER THE ABBASIDS

Administration

The
Govern-
ment was
absolute

The form of the Abbasid Government was an absolute monarchy. There was practically no check on the power of the Khalifah. He was the head of the State as well as of the Church. He was the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and the conferrer of titles. He had the power to nominate his successor to the future throne and in doing this he followed no rule of succession. The object of the early Abbasids was the consolidation of the empire and to attain this end foreign conquests were abandoned.

The power
of Vizier

Below the Khalifah was the Vizier. The office of the Vizier was of Persian origin. The Viziers were of two classes—(a) those with limited powers and (b) those with unlimited powers. The Vizier with unlimited powers was called the Grand Vizier. The Grand Vizier practically exercised the powers and prerogatives of the sovereign and was only required to inform the Khalifah of all he had done. He could make any arrangement he considered necessary, without preliminary sanction. Only he could not dismiss an officer appointed by the Khalifah. On the other hand, he had the power of appointing officers in the name of the sovereign and of sitting in a final court of appeal in law suits. Except under the first two Khalifas the Vizier was all in all. His power grew more and more as the Khalifah plunged deeper into the pleasures of the harem. The power of the Limited Vizier was not so large or extensive. He had no initiative of his own but had merely to carry out the orders of the Khalifah. He was merely the intermediary between the ruler and the ruled. The Viziers were required to have a thorough knowledge of administration and taxation and of the local condition of the provinces.

The Government of the Khalifah was called ad-Diwan-ul-Aziz or the August Board, presided over by the Grand Vizier. The Diwan-ul-Kharaj (Dept. of Finance), the Diwan-ul-Dia (Office of the Crown Property), the Diwan-uz-Zuman (Accounts Office), the Diwan-ul-Jund (War Office), the Diwan-ul-Mawali-wal-Ghilman (Office for the Protection of Clients and Slaves), the Diwan-uz-Zimanan-Nafakat, (Household Expenses Office), the Diwan-ur-Rasail (Board of Correspondence or Chancery Office), the Diwan-an-Nazr fil Mazalim (Board for the Inspection of Grievances), and the Diwan-ul-Ahdas-wash-Shurta (Militia and Police Office) were the principal departments of the State. Besides these, there were other minor departments.

The Diwan
ul-Aziz

The
depart-
ments of
the State

For the maintenance of internal peace, the police department was organised. The head of the department was called *Shahib-ush-Shurta*. In later times the *Shahib-ush-Shurta* assumed the position of Vizier.

Police
depart-
ment

Justice was administered by the Qazis and the Chief Qazi who was called the Qazi-ul-Quzzat was the highest judicial officer. To help the Qazis in the administration of justice, another class of officers was established who were called *Aadls*. In the case of civil rights among the non-Muslims all questions were referred to their own ecclesiastical heads.

The admin-
istration-
of justice

Provincial Government

For administrative purposes the whole empire was divided into several provinces. Each province was governed by an officer called the Ameer, who was appointed by the Khalifah and was directly responsible to the Khalifah. In his own province the Ameer exercised supreme authority as long as he enjoyed the terture of his office. But his office was not hereditary. He was subject to transfer or recall at any moment.

The
Governor

The *Shurta* who was under the *Shahib-ush-Shurta* was in charge of the city police. The municipal police was under a Special Officer called the *Muhtasib*.

The *Shurta*
and the
Muhtasib

The Qazis

Each city had its own Qazi and in large towns there were several Deputy Qazis. In the beginning of the Abbasid period the provincial Qazis were appointed by the Provincial Governors but afterwards they were appointed by the Chief Qazi of Baghdad.

Postal department

An important feature of the Abbasid Government was the postal department. In each provincial capital a postmaster, called in Arabic Shahib-ul-Barid, was charged with the control of the postal establishment. He not only superintended the work of the postal department, but also kept the Khalifah informed of all important provincial matters. "He was in fact a direct confidential agent of the Central Government and periodically submitted confidential reports on the condition of the Province". There were other officials but their names are not mentionable here.

The Revenue

Revenues

The revenue of the Abbasid empire was derived from the land tax, which constituted the main source of income from non-believers; tithes or income tax, the fifth of the produce of mines and pasturage, the tax on non-Muslim (in lieu of military service), customs duties, salt and fishery tax, tax paid by shop-keepers for the use of the public places, tax upon factories, tax upon luxuries and tax upon imports. The last one was abolished by Wathiq.

Military Organization

During the reign of the first few Khalifahs the military organization was a matter of wonder and great astonishment, though the later Abbasids lost their military predominance. It has already been shown that under Marwan II the Umayyad army is said to have numbered 1,20,000. Under the early Abbasids still a larger number of forces were available for employment in the field. Khalifah Harun ar-Rashid had under his command 1,35,000 paid soldiers and a very large number of volunteers when he marched against Emperor Nicephorus. In the civil war between al-Amin and al-Mamun, the

latter's forces which occupied Iraq, were estimated at 1,25,000 and on the side of Amin, the ruling Khalifah, there must have been a considerable number. Besides this, both Mamun and Amin must have left some additional forces behind them to garrison the eastern provinces and the frontier towns respectively. "In a parade at Baghdad, conducted under al-Muktadir (917 A.D.) in the presence of the Byzantine envoys, 1,60,000 cavalry and footmen are reported to have taken part".

Estimated force under the Abbasids

Under the Abbasids higher military posts were open to all nationals and equal salaries were given to soldiers of all nationalities. This treatment of the soldiers attracted many men to Islam and to the army of the Khalifah. Many new converts in Syria, Egypt, Africa, al-Iraq, Persia and Transoxiana chose military service under the Abbasids.

Military post open to all nationals

Al-Mansur formed three national divisions viz., the North Arabian Division (the Mudarite), the South Arabian Division (Yamanite) and the Khurasani Division. Al-Mu'tasim added two more divisions—one consisting of the Turks and the other of the Africans. This division of the army into national corps destroyed the 'esprit de corps' of the Muslim army and introduced in its place a spirit of antagonism, jealousy and rivalry for power which ultimately proved fatal to the empire.

Formation of national corps

The salaries of the soldiers were much less than those under the Umayyads. Under the Umayyads the average salary of the forces was about six hundred dirhams per annum. It rose under Mu'awiyah to 1000 per head per year. In the reign of as-Saffah, the first Abbasid Khalifah, the average pay of the foot soldiers was 960 dirhams per annum in addition to the usual rations, allowances and share in the booty. The horseman received double the salary. Towards the close of Harun ar-Rashid's reign the salary of a foot soldier had fallen down to 60 dirhams a month and under al-Mamun the salary was further reduced to 20 dirhams a month. The horseman received only 40 dirhams. During the civil war between al-Amin and al-

Salary of the soldiers

Mamun, both sides paid their soldiers at 960 dirhams per annum.

Main
military
stations

Under the Abbasids Baghdad became a most prosperous city. It was not only the capital of the Abbasids but also served the military purpose. Al-Mansur fortified the city of Baghdad. He also built a strong citadel near ar-Raqqah on the upper reaches of the Euphrates and garrisoned it with Khurasanian soldiers. He called the citadel ar-Rafiqah.

Fortifica-
tion of the
frontier
towns

Al-Mansur and his successors recovered all the frontier towns, fortified them and planted in them Muslim colonies. Harun ar-Rashid created a special province named al-Awasim out of the border towns of Asia Minor. Al-Mansur built and fortified Mar'ash, Malatyah and several other border towns. He quartered garrison of 4,000 men at Malatyah and gave them special allowances and facilities. Ar-Rashid had surrounded the town of Massisah with ramparts. He manned Taurus with a garrison and converted it into a large camp. He fortified Adana and quartered a garrison there. At Anazarbah (11 miles north-east of Massisah) he planted another military colony. He built a citadel at Mar'ash and called it al-Haruniyah whilst Empress Zubayda rebuilt Iskandarun (Alexandretta) at her own expense. Al-Mu'tasim completed the fortification of Massisah and had peopled the old town of Tyana with military colonists. The system of border fortifications was also adopted in other provinces. High salaries were paid to the garrison of outposts.

The Army

The army consisted of the infantry, the cavalry, the archers, the naphtha firemen (annaffatun), the hole-markers and the labour corps. On active service there were two classes of soldiers—the regulars and the volunteers. The regulars who were permanently on active service were called *Murtaziqah* (regularly paid) and the volunteers were designated *Mutawwiah*. The latter received ration only while on duty. Their women and children received gratuity either in kind or in money during their absence from home.

The infantry used lances, bows and arrows, javelins, swords and battle-axes and the cavalry

used lances, bows and arrows and long, broad and straight swords. Archery was much improved under the Abbasids. The naffatun prepared and used naphtha (or green fire). In Roman-Byzantine fashion every 10 men of the army were commanded by an Arif, every 100 by a Naqib and every 1000 by a Quaid. "A corps was generally composed of 1000 men and was commanded by an Ameer.

Weapons
of the
army

The army was accompanied by a select staff of engineers in all its movements and these officers were stationed at every fortress and city. From the early times the Arabs used to have physicians and surgeons in the army. Each army had a Qazi who was in charge of the booty and distributed it according to the laws of Islam. Under the Abbasids the Arabs had a very efficient spy system. But the morale of the soldiers was much lower than that of the fighters of the earlier periods.

Engineers
and physi-
cians in the
army

Morale of
the
soldiers

Naval Power

Under the Abbasids the Arab merchants traversed India and the Pacific Ocean. The Arabs were supreme in the Mediterranean. From Antioch to the Atlantic they took 36 days to journey. The Tigris, the Euphrates and the Persian Gulf lying close to the capital, facilitated sea-borne trade and communications in the East. When Mansur founded Baghdad on the bank of the Tigris, each place of the city was converted into a waterway. The site of the capital was selected chiefly for trade communications with other parts of the world through the Tigris and the Euphrates.

Under the Abbasids, maritime trade was fostered and encouraged. Adan was the great centre of trade between Africa and Arabia and the meeting point of the trade between India and China on one hand and Egypt on the other. Siraf was the world port of the Persian Gulf through which the exports and imports of entire Persia passed. Basrah, Hurmuz and Daibul were the other important ports of the Arabs. The Muslims had trading centres in all the important cities of the Far East.

Main trade
centres

Attacks on
the enemy
by sea

The Abbasids occupied Sind as successors of the Umayyads. In 159 A.H./775 A.D. in the reign of the Abbasids Khalifah Mahdi, the Arabs made a naval raid on Gujrat. Though Ifriqiyah became independent under Harun ar-Rashid he was able to conquer Rhodes for the second time. Crete and Cyprus were also attacked by him in 175 A.H./791 A.D. and the Greek admiral was taken prisoner. In the reign of al-Mamun the Aghlabid fleet conquered Sicily and ravaged lower Italy. It was the mightiest fleet in the Mediterranean. During the reign of al-Wathiq the Aghlabid forces appeared before the very walls of Rome. The naval power of the Muslims thus reaches the height of its glory in the reign of the Abbasids.

Social Condition

It will be very interesting to go through the past history of the Abbasids and to form an idea therefrom about the social and economic condition of the people.

Women
enjoyed
higher
position in
the society

Culture of
women

The Khalifah was the head of the society. He commanded the highest respect of the people. Below the Khalifah stood the high officials of the court in respect. Women enjoyed the same position in the society as their Umayyad sisters. But towards the end of the tenth century, the system of strict seclusion and absolute separation from the male sexes had become general. During this period many of the Abbasid ladies such as Khaizuran, Ulayyah, Zubayda and Buran excelled in handling the machinery of the State and took an active part in politics. Many of them also evinced a keen interest in literary pursuits. Empress Zubayda was a talented woman and an accomplished poetess. Zubayda who won national fame in the days of Mu'tasim is described by the Kitabul Aghani as a woman of great beauty, virtue and talent. She was also famous as a singer and a musician. Fazl was a gifted poetess in the reign of Mu'tawakkil. Shaikha Shuhda was another talented lady who lectured in Baghdad on history and literature. Jainab Umm-ul-Muwayyid was a distinguished lawyer. Taqia, daughter of Abul Faraj,

was a renowned poetess. In a word, the Muslim women in the days of the Abbasids were cultured and enlightened.

Music was patronized in the Abbasid society. Ulayyah was one of the most accomplished musicians of her time. Princesses and ladies of the highest rank often attended the musical performance and sometimes they gave musical soiree in their houses. Dancing was also encouraged in the society. Drinking was not unknown to the Abbasids. Polo, chess, archery, horse-racing, hunting, etc., became popular games under the Abbasids.

Music and
other
amuse-
ments

Social re-unions were held in the houses of the nobles and magnates where people of different talents used to attend for literary discussion. The aim of such gatherings was to find out truth for people. This society compiled several books on history, literature, philosophy and science. Book-sellers occupied an important position in the then society. Their shops were the centre of attraction for the scholars and the students.

Social
re-unions

The slave system was in vogue under the Abbasids. Every rich man had a slave, or a number of slaves attached to his household. The slaves were recruited from non-Muslim people captured by force, or taken prisoner in times of war or purchased in times of peace. 'Some were Negroes, others were Turks, still others were white'. The white slaves were mainly Greeks and Slavs, Armenians and Berbers. There were many eunuchs among the slaves who were engaged in the service of the 'harem'. 'The maidens among slaves were used as singers, dancers and concubines, and some of them exerted appreciable influence over their Khalifah-masters'.

Slaves

The dress of the aristocratic class was modelled after that of the rulers. The common head-gear was the black high-peaked hat, 'galansuwah', made of felt or wool. It was introduced by al-Mansur. 'Wide trousers of Persian origin, shirt, vest and jacket with outer mantle completed the wardrobe of a gentleman'. The theologicians wore distinctive black

Dress of
men and
women

turbans and mantles (taylasan). The dress of women varied according to their rank and position. The fashionable head-dress for the ladies of the high-rank introduced by Uaiyyah, half-sister of Harun ar-Rashid, "was evidently a dome-shaped cap round the bottom of which was circlet that would be adored with jewels." Among other objects of feminine adornment were anklets and bracelets. Among the middle classes, women generally covered their heads with flat ornaments of gold, a kind of fillet, often interspersed with pearls and emeralds.

Economic Condition

Commerce

People pursued different professions of their livelihood in the days of Abbasids. Industrialists, artisans, men of letters and technicians formed the upper middle-class, while the lower middle-class consisted of the agriculturists and shepherds. These people were free from the cares and anxieties of the modern economic life.

The Abbasid period witnessed the progress in trade and commerce. Baghdad, Basrah and Alexandria became the business centres of the time and through them the Muslim world came to be introduced to the other civilized countries of the world. People carried their business to the outside world and brought immense wealth therefrom to the capital.

Industry

Industry was greatly developed under the Abbasids. Cottage industry flourished in different parts of the empire. In Western Asia the manufacture of the rugs, tapestry, silk, cotton and woollen fabrics, satin, brocade, sofa and cushion covers as well as other articles of furniture and kitchen utensils could be chiefly noticed. "The many looms of Persia and Iraq turned out carpets and textiles". Agriculture received great impetus in the hands of the Abbasids. The Khalifahs were mainly interested in agricultural affairs, because they realized that farming was the chief source of the State income. They increased the fertility of the soil by proper irrigation and improved the sta-

Agriculture

tus of the native inhabitants on whom the tilling of the land wholly depended.

Education

During the Abbasid period education reached the climax of its development. The Khalifahs were the distinguished patrons of learning and the learned. Towards the close of the Umayyad period education had become common throughout the Islamic world. Most of the Muslims, both male and female could read and understand the Quran. The entire teaching system of the Muslims falls into two groups, namely, the elementary school and the school for higher education. "The elementary school was an adjunct of the mosque," says Prof. Hitti and the Quran was used as a reading text book. Sometimes schools were held in private houses and in shops and in mosques. Mosque-schools were numerous in the city. According to Yaqubi, there were in that capital (Baghdad) thirty thousand mosques. Besides the mosques, there were 'maktabs' which served as elementary schools.

Elementary schools

The curriculum of the elementary schools consisted of reading, writing, grammar, traditions of the Prophet, elementary principles of arithmetic and some devotional poems. "Throughout the whole curriculum memory work was especially emphasized".* Senior students studied Quranic exegesis, Quranic criticism, the science of Apostolic Tradition, Jurisprudence, scholastic Theology, Lexicography, Rhetoric and Literature. Advanced scholars engaged themselves in the duty of Astronomy, spherical Geometry, Philosophy, Geometry, Music and Medicine.

Curriculum of schools

Under the Abbasids, child education began at home. At the age of six, boys were admitted into schools and, 'it was then that his formal education started.' Along with the boys, the girls were allowed to attend the schools. The girls were expected to read the Quran and acquire religious knowledge. "Those who continued and became master of theolo-

Co-education prevailed

* P. K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*.

System of
private
tuition
existed

gy and other subjects, took to learning as a profession.* A brilliant woman named Amrah, used her house as school. The system of co-education was prevalent among the Arabs in those days. "The benefit of teaching was extended to the poor, even slaves in some cases, were admitted to the schools."** The system of appointing private tutors for children was in vogue among the wealthy persons of the society.

Institutions
of higher
education

Bayt al-
Hikmah

The education under the Abbasids was not only confined among children in primary schools, but Al-Mamun found *Bayt al-Hikmah* (House of Wisdom) in his capital where the higher branches of learning were pursued. "Besides serving as a translation bureau", says Prof. Hitti, "this institution functioned as an academy and public library and had an observatory connected with it." According to Ibn al-Nadim, Salam, the Principal of the College, was delegated by the Caliph to go to the country of the Greeks for the purpose of translating their works into Arabic. "*Bayt al-Hikmah* may claim," says To-tah, "the honour of having been the first university of both the medieval and the modern world, for it bore torch aloft long before Bologna, Paris, Prague, Oxford and Cambridge." The College *Bayt al-Hikmah* boasted of a library with a librarian who was a noted mathematician and astronomer. This man was al-Khwarizmi. Many savants and scholars like Abu Nuwas, al-Tabari, Yaqubi and Masudi flocked to the institutions of higher learning at Baghdad. In Baghdad there were no less than one hundred book-shops.

The Nizami-
yah estab-
lished in
1065.

The real academy in Islam which became the model for later schools of higher learning was the *Nizamiyah* established by Nizamul Mulk, the Persian vizier of the Seljuq Sultans, Alp Arslan and Malik Shah about the middle of the eleventh century. According to Muslim historians, Nizamul Mulk was the first who founded schools (*Madrasahs*) in Islam. According to Ibn Jubair, lectures at the

* Shustere, *Outlines of Islamic Culture*.

** Ibn Khall.

Nizamiyah were open to the public. Nizamul Mulk organised a system of education and founded several colleges and universities, endowed adequately with munificent grants from the Government. He appointed the best qualified men as heads of colleges. Al-Ghazzali, the famous philosopher, lectured in the *Nizamiyah* for long four years (1091-5 A.D.). Baha-ud-Din and Imam-ul-Haramain were the eminent teachers of the *Nizamiyah*. The *Nizamiyah* was a theological institution recognised by the State. Nizamul Mulk's other colleges were at Ispahan, Merv, Samarkand, Balkh, Aleppo, Damascus, Ghazni and even at Lahore. The *Nizamiyah* survived the catastrophe that befell the capital by the devastation of Halagu in 1258 A.D., and it was merged with *Mustansiriyah* about two years after the capture of Baghdad by Halagu Khan. Al-Mustansiriyah was founded by the Caliph, al-Mustansir "who built it in 1234 A.D. as a seminary for the four orthodox rites." The magnificence of its architecture and the sumptuousness of its furniture made it a structure without an equal. The *Mustansiriyah* contained four separate law schools, one for each of the orthodox sects of the *Sunnis* with a professor at the head of each who had seventy five students in his charge to whom he gave instruction on gratis. Each professor received a monthly salary and to each of the three hundred students one gold dinar was assigned. The students of this college were provided with daily rations of bread and meat. According to Ibn Furat there was a library in the *Mustansiriyah* with rare books treating of the various sciences. This college like the *Nizamiyah* happily escaped the ravages of The Mongols. Tajud-Dowla, another minister of the Saliugs, may claim the honour of establishing several seminaries in Nishapur and other towns of the empire. He is said to have been the greatest patron of higher education of Islam before Salahuddin. He founded a college under his name *Tajyya* which spoke highly of his love of learning.

"In all the higher institutions of theology the science of tradition lay at the basis of the curricu-

Mustansi-
nah built by
Mustansir

Tajyya es-
tablished by
Tajud-
Dowla

Madrasahs
endowed
with prop-
erty

lum and memory work was especially stressed".* To build a Madrasah was a pious act to the Muslims. Madrasahs were endowed with land and property the income of which went to the support of teachers and poor students. Ibn Jubayr says that there were thirty schools in Baghdad and more than 500 students drawing daily rations from the funds of the mosque of that city.

Higher grade
teachers
highly
respected

There were three types of teachers under the Abbasids. The first teacher who simply taught the Quran to children in the elementary schools was called *mu'allim*, sometimes *faqih* for his knowledge on theology. The social position of the *mu'allim* was very low and condemnable. "Seek no advice from teachers" of elementary schools, acquired proverbial usage. The second type of teachers may be called *Muaddib* (teacher) representing a class which was engaged in teaching the sons of the persons of higher strata as well as those of princes and Khalifahs. This class of teachers was superior to that of the elementary schools. Next to it came the professors of high learning. They were specialists in the teaching of logic, mathematics, rhetoric and jurisprudence. The higher grade teachers were held in high respect by the public.

Salary of
the teachers

The teacher received their salaries from the pupils in the form of chickens, eggs, milk, bread and vegetables. The pay of the teachers was very small. "Whoever gave himself up to the study of language and literature and was not content with the poor pittance of a school-master, or a private tutor had to look to some other means of livelihood as well. As means of living, poetry and lyrical panegyrics offered the surest prospect."** Many of them were appointed panegyrists of the Khalifahs. But the luckiest was he who was entrusted with the education of the princes. As time went on, the pay of the teachers was more regular. Ibn Batuta states that those who taught the Quran received pay. The teachers, in course of time, drew fifteen dinars a day and this

Pay of tea-
chers increa-
sed in later
period

* *History of the Arabs.*

** Khuda Baksh, *Islamic Civilization.*

was quite a princely pay. "Teachers as well as poor students were supported by the income derived from endowments attached to mosques, shrines, hospitals and in some cases from donation from the wealthy classes. Some of them received allowances from the Royal Treasury."*

At the age of fifteen, the youth who had acquired elementary knowledge in the native town, usually set out for the next great town to hear the lectures there. Scholars used to travel and take long journeys in search of knowledge. "There was no regular system of education nor a fixed syllabus, each teacher or professor having his own method of teaching and syllabus."** The lecturer usually followed the text-book written by himself or by some other authority. The founders of the schools had the right of appointment and removal of professors but even then in the method of teaching and in the choice of subjects, the teachers enjoyed perfect freedom. The State interfered only in a case where religion was in danger.

Teachers
allowed free-
dom of tea-
ching and
choosing of
subjects

Regular vacations, at fixed times of the year were not in vogue. The commencement of the vacation depended entirely upon the conclusion of the course of lectures. Experienced professors knew the text-book by heart, so that they were not put into an awkward position in lecture-hall. The lecture was delivered slowly to enable the students to take it down correctly. Many a time students were censured for their inability to take down lectures. In the lecture-hall at Nishapur there were 500 inkpots always ready for the use of students. The lecturer was not satisfied merely with delivering his lecture; he also wanted that the students should follow and understand him. For this purpose he put questions to the students and asked them to put questions to him. "Many teachers while discussing the subject, left their seat and mixed with the students."† On many occasions the teachers discussed the subjects

Aim of the
teachers was
to educate
their pupil

* A. M. Shaukhery, *Outlines of Islamic Culture.*

** Khuda Baksh, *Islamic Civilization.*

† Ibid.

Relation between teachers and those taught

outside the school. The teachers sometimes invited the students to their homes. Study in the high schools was thus not merely a hearing of lectures, but also a thorough drilling in the subject. The lecturers were highly respected by their pupils. The pupils personally served the teachers, went out with them, fetched necessities for them from the markets, and even cooked their food. Sometimes the teachers gave their daughters in marriage to the best of them.* Khaqani and Kushairi married the daughters of their respective teachers. The students, after satisfying their teachers that they had learnt their subjects well, could ask and obtain certificates.

Architecture

With the fall of the Umayyad dynasty, the seat of the Caliphate was transferred from Damascus to Baghdad and the Persian influence began to have a marked effect on the manners and habits of the Muslim world. The Arabs lost their pre-eminence not only in the Army and at Court, but also in the society. Their cultural life was also affected. The Hellenistic influences of Syria were replaced by the influences of Sassanian Persia and Iraq which profoundly modified the art and architecture.

The mosques of this period vary widely in design. The *apadana* type i.e., the type in which the roof stands directly on wooden columns, without the intermediary of arches was widely spread. The mosques became the centre of all activities during the early period of Islam. Next to mosques were the tombs of kings, saints and nobles. After these, public buildings, palaces, forts, etc., occupied an important position in architectural activity.

The Abbasid Caliphs, like the Umayyads patronised art and architecture. During the reigns of more than five hundred years many buildings and palaces were built in different parts of the Empire. The second Abbasid Caliph, al-Mansur, founded the city of Baghdad in the year, 762 A.D.

* Ibn Khall.

The city was noted for a good number of palaces, mosques and other buildings built by successive Khalifas and other reigning princes of Iran. It was a round-shaped city enclosed by a double wall of four gates, namely the Kufa Gate (S.W.), the Basrah Gate (S.E.), the Khurasan Gate (N.E.) and the Damascus Gate (N.W.). The Caliph shifted his residence to Baghdad when it was made the capital of the Abbasid Empire. The main features of the newly founded city were the palaces of the Caliph, called the Golden Gates, crowned by a great dome of green colour. The palace was a square of 400 cubits a side and lay in the middle of the city. A second palace, called the Khuld, was constructed after a few years and this became a favourite residence of Harun ar-Rashid. Al-Mansur built the royal mosque. It was built of sun-dried bricks and clay. Harun ar-Rashid rebuilt it and Motazid enlarged it. The mosque of Cordova (787 A.D.), the mosque of 'Amr in Egypt (827 A.D.), the mosque of Cairowan (836 A.D.), the great mosque of Susa (850 A.D.), the great mosque of Samara and the mosque of Tunis speak much of the architectural taste of the Abbasids.

Azad-ud-Dawlah, the greatest Buwayhid Ameer, built a fine hospital on the bank of the Tigris. It was more a palace than a hospital. A new palace called the Taj was constructed by the Khalifah Mutazid. It was completed by his successors. There were many other magnificent palaces and buildings and many wealthy people, princes and even Emperors of Iran had their own palaces in Baghdad. But unfortunately no trace of the architectural monument which once adorned the city of Baghdad is left at the present day. In this connection Prof. Hitti says, "The Caliphal palace called the Golden Gate or Greek Dome erected by the founder of Baghdad, as well as his Palace of Eternity (Qusr al-Khuld) and the Rusafah Palace, built for the crown prince al-Mahdi, the palace of the Plediades on which al-Mutamid who restored Baghdad as capital after Sammara, spent 40,00,000 dinars, his adjoining palace styled the Crown (al-Taj), completed by his son al-Muktafi, the unique mansion of al-Muqtadir, designated the

Main architectural monuments adorned the city of Baghdad

None of the architectural monument left to-day.

Hall of Tree on account of the gold and silver tree that stood in its pond; the Buwayhid Mansion known by the name al-Mu'izziyah after Mu'izz-ud-Dawlah which cost 10,00,000 dinars—all these and others like them left no remains to give us an inkling of the splendour that was theirs." The destruction was brought about by the civil war between Amin and Mamun, by the invasion of Hulagu and by other natural causes.

Painting

Painting has been discouraged by Islam. But yet the Umayyads and the Abbasids caused the walls of their palaces to be decorated with floral designs and even with the painting of human figures. The second Abbasid Caliph set upon the dome of his palace the figure of a horseman and al-Amin had his pleasure-boats on the Tigris fashioned like lions, eagles and dolphins and al-Muqtadir had a gold and silver tree with eighteen branches planted in a huge tank in his palace. "On either side of the tank the statues of fifteen horsemen dressed in brocade and armed with lances, as if they were ready to move in combat. The Khalifah, al-Mutasim who built Samarra, had ornamented the walls of his palace like those of Qasayr Anirah with frescoes of nude female figures and hunting scenes. Al-Mutawakkil employed many Byzantine painters for the mural decoration of his palace.

The Muslims had to employ Jacobite or Nestorian painters till they themselves had time to develop their independent artists. The representation of the Buraq of the Prophet is said to have been produced by Nestorians. Muslim religious painting has not come down to us until the beginning of the 14th century. Its derivation was from the art of the Oriental Christian churches, particularly the Jacobite and the Nestorian. In miniature illustration the Manichaean influence is sometimes dominant.*

Maqrisi was the first Muslim author who attempted a history of Islamic painters but his work

Muslims first employed Jacobite and Nestorian painters

* Arnold, *Legacy of Islam*.

has been lost. The earliest Arabic manuscripts with miniatures that were available for study do not date before the 13th century. These manuscripts are '*Kalilah Wa Dimnah* and *al-Harris Muqamat*' in which, besides animal representations, plants and vegetations in conventional forms are drawn.

Calligraphy

The art of calligraphy in Islam occupies a unique place in the history of the world. It received the approval of the Holy Quran in the second or third Hijra of the Moslem era, and it soon became the 'highly prized art.' "Of all the arts that Moslems cultivated," says Ziauddin, "calligraphy is without doubt the most refined." Writing as a decoration art was never practised by any people of the world before the Arabs. They gave more value to written words than they did to precious stones. To them the art of penmanship was far superior to all other arts. This art was begun and carried on its early stages by the Arabs but it received its highest fulfilment at the hands of the Persians.

Calligraphy highly encouraged by the Arabs

The Arabs had a system of writing in pre-Islamic days. It had two styles, namely monumental and cursive. The former system was known to the Bedouin poets. The cursive style used on soft material like leather, palm-bast, parchment, papyrus, etc. The former system used on harder material, like camel bones, especially ribs and shoulder blades, potsherds, flat white stones, wood and metals. During the Abbasid period, a good number of styles of writing had developed.

Styles of writing

Calligraphy along with its associate arts, namely, colour decoration, illumination and the whole craft of book-binding owed its birth and bloom to the sacred book. During the latter period of the Abbasids the art of book decoration and Quran illumination began and it reached its highest watermark in the Seljuq period.

The calligrapher enjoyed a position of dignity and honour in the society. Mia Kalilullah Shah, a calligraphist, was greatly honoured in his days. He

Position of
the Calli-
graphy

copied the 'Nue Ras' with care and made a present of it to Ibrahim Adil Shah, the king of the Deccan who was so much pleased that he bestowed on him the title of "The King of the Pen," and as a mark of honour made him sit on his throne. Many a ruler in those days sought to learn the art of calligraphy.

Calligraphers
flourished
during the
Middle Ages

Of the calligraphists the names of the following deserve special mention here. Al-Rayhani shed a lustre on the Abbasid court during the reign of Mamun. Next to Rayhani was Ibn Muqlah, the Abbasid vizier whose hand was cut off by the reigning Khalifah (al-Razi) but yet he could write elegantly with his left hand. Ibn al-Buwwab, the inventor of the Muhaqqak style, occupied a special place in the history of calligraphy. Yaqut al-Mustasimi, the Court calligraphist of the last Abbasid Khalifah, has been considered the greatest of Naskh writer. His reputation was so great that even in his lifetime books copied by him had spread all over the Muslim world. In fine, it can be said in the words of Prof. P. K. Hitti that 'calligraphy is perhaps the only Arab art which to-day has Christian and Muslim representatives in Constantinople, Cairo, Beirut and Damascus whose productions excel in elegance and beauty any masterpieces that the ancients ever produced.'

Music

Music patro-
nised by the
Muslims

Muslim music began to progress during the time of the Umayyads and reached its highest excellence under the Abbasids. Some of the Abbasid princes, such as Ibrahim, brother of Harun ar-Rashid, were among the best musicians of their age. Musicians were highly rewarded and held in esteem in the Abbasid Court. Music became the subject to be studied and appreciated by the learned men in Islam. Imam Ghazzali in his work, *Ahya-ul-ulum* has given a description of lawful and unlawful music. To him music is a food to the nerve and the brain. The most important work in Arabic on music is the one composed by Abul Faraj Ispahani in 21 parts in which he has illustrated one hundred select tunes and has traced their origin, nature and scope. There were

schools of music in Baghdad. The best musicians were found in the capital of the Abbasids. During this period books on music were translated from Greek sources into Arabic.

The Abbasid al-Mahdi began where the last Umayyad ended.* Himself a famous musician-singer, he invited and "patronised Siyat of Makkah whose song warmed the chilled more than a hot bath."** After his death his pupil Ibrahim al-Mawsuli became the master of classical music. Ibrahim, a descendant of a noble Persian family, was a famous musician, whom ar-Rashid took into his service as a boon companion, bestowed on him 1,50,000 dirhams and assigned him a monthly salary of 10,000 dirhams. Ibrahim had a rival named Ibn Jami in the field of music. In the judgement of Ibn Jami he "was the greatest of the musicians in versatility but Ibn Jami had the sweetest tone."

Al-Mahdi
was a patron
of music

The Court of Harun ar-Rashid encouraged music and singing like science and art to the extent of becoming the centre of a galaxy of musical stars. It is said that two thousand singers participated in a musical festival under the Caliph's patronage. Al-Amin held a similar night entertainment in which the personnel of the palace, both male and female, danced till dawn.‡ Mukhariq, a pupil of Ibrahim, was a master singer who later passed into the possession of ar-Rashid.

Al-Mamun and Al-Mutawakkil had a musician named Ishaq bin Ibrahim al-Mawsuli who was regarded as dean of the musicians of his age.† As an all-round musician he was "the greatest that Islam had produced." Al-Wathiq was the first Caliph-musician who performed on the lute and composed a hundred melodies. After him came al-Muntasir and al-Mutazz who showed some poetical and musical talent. But al-Mutamid was the real Caliph-

Al-Mawsuli
was a
famous
musician

* Hitti, *History of the Arabs*.

** *Aghani*.

† Ibn Nadim, *Fihrist*.

‡ *Fihrist*.

musician in whose presence the geographer Ibn-Khurdadbin delivered his oration on music.

The first writer on the theory of music is Yunus al-Katib. He was followed by Khalil who was the author of the work on prosody and the first Arabic lexicographer. His Book of Notes and Book of Rhythms were famous in the history of the theory of music. Ibn Firnas was 'the first who taught the science of music in Spain.' Between the eighth and tenth centuries many of the treatises of the Greeks on the theory of music and the science of sound were translated into Arabic. Hunayn ibn Ishaq and Yuhanna ibn al-Batriq translated Greek works into Arabic. Two Aristotelian works, *Problema* and *De anima*, were translated into Arabic under the titles, *Kitab al-Masail* and *Kitab fi al-Nafs* by the Nestorian physician, Hunayn ibn Ishaq who was responsible for the translation of Galen's *De voce* under the title *Kitab al-Sawt*.

Aristoxenus was known chiefly in two works in Arabic, the Principles (of Harmony) and a book on Rhythm (*Kitab al-Iqa*). Euclid had two books on music in Arabic, namely, *Kitab al-Nagham* and *Kitab al-Qanun*. Nicomachus, Aristotle's son, was read in a Grand Book on music and in several compendia. His *Introduction to Arithmetic*, which incidentally deals with music was translated by Thabit ibn Qurra. Ptolemy was known by a book on music which was probably his *Treatise on Harmony*. It was from these and other Greek works that the the Arabs derived their more scientific ideas on the theory of sound.

Musical writers after the Greek school were led by the famous philosopher, al-Kindi whose works bear the earliest traces of Greek influence. Seven treatises on the theory of music were composed by him and three have been preserved, namely, the Essentials of Knowledge in music; On the Melodies; the Necessary Book in the Composition of Melodies. Thabit ibn Qurra, Muhammad ibn al-Razi and Qusta ibn Luqa were the contemporary theorists. They were followed by al-Farabi who was the greatest

Musical theories

Al-Kindi led the musical writers after the Greek school

writer on the theory of music during the Middle Ages. The works of Farabi are among the best and even at the present day may be studied with advantage. He has shown the errors of Greek writers and his criticism on Greek music shows the extent of Muslim advance in the subject. Besides writing commentaries on various works of Euclid, he produced three original works. His *Kitab al-Musiqi al-Kabir* is regarded as a very important contribution to the study of music. His compendium of sciences, *Ihsa al-ulum* exerted powerful influence in the West. He knew mensural music and has accepted the major and minor third (4:5—5:6) as consonances. After him came al-Buzjani who composed a compendium on the science of Rhythm. At the same time there lived encyclopaedists known as the Ikhwan al-Safa (Brethren of Purity) whose treatise on music was widely read. Muhammad al-Khwarizmi has dealt with the subject in his book, *Miftahul-ulum*. Ibn Sina after al-Farabi contributed the most important works on the theory of music in Arabic. These are to be found in the *Shifi* and *Najat*. He also wrote an introduction to the Arts of Music. His disciple, Ibn Zaila, wrote the book of *Sufficiency in Music*. Ibn Rushd wrote the famous commentary on Aristotle's *De anima*. After the fall of Baghdad (1258 A.D.) the fine writers on music almost ceased to exist. Their place was taken by a host of legists who argued for or against the 'permissibility of music'.

Al-Farabi

Scientific and literary activities during the Abbasid period

With the advent of the Abbasids in power the Islamic empire opened a new era in the domain of science and literature. By the beginning of the Abbasid Age the many-sided cultural influence produced the early phase of the real scientific age of Islamic culture. Al-Mamun opened a translation department for the preservation of foreign science and culture. Harun ar-Rashid completed the work of his predecessor. He appointed learned translators of all nationalities and creeds—Hindus, Parsis, Christians, Jews and Muslims. Books and extant materials were

A new era in the domain of science and literature

collected by Mamun from all countries. He is said to have asked the Byzantine Emperor to send the savant Leo to Baghdad in exchange for five tons of gold.

Preservation
of Aristotle,
Galen and
Ptolemy's
works

In medicine, philosophy, alchemy, astronomy, mathematics, chemistry, geography, law, theology and philology the contribution of the Muslims were no doubt great and impressive. Europe owes a good deal to them in chemistry, medicine and mathematics. They carried on original thinking and research in all these branches of knowledge. They translated many foreign works into Arabic and their translations were sent, together with many original contributions, to Europe through Syria, Spain and Sicily. This work of translation is no doubt important in the history of culture. "The researches of Aristotle, Galen and Ptolemy would have been lost to the world, if the Muslims had not kept them preserved by translation."

The Abbasid Khalifas were great patrons of learning and they nourished and nurtured a galaxy of brilliant scientists and scholars who made their most valuable contributions to the culture of the world. The following subjects will speak of their contributions to different branches of science.

Medicine

The Umayyad Khalifas encouraged the study of medicine but real progress in Arabian medicine began with the coming of the Abbasids. The early Abbasid Khalifas established hospitals called "bimaristan." The first hospital was opened by Harun ar-Rashid in Baghdad. In course of time "Thirty-four hospitals were established in various parts of the Muslim world." Other branches of medicine, such as surgery, pharmacy, ophthalmology, etc., were greatly developed during the Abbasid period. The notable medical authors of this period were Persian in nationality but Arab in language. Ali al-Tabari, al-Razi, Ali ibn Abbas and Ibn Sina occupy unique places in the history of the world.

Ali ibn Rabban al-Tabari who flourished in the middle of the 9th century was an Iranian of Tabaristan. He was originally a Christian but in

the reign of Mutawakkil he embraced Islam and entered into the service of the Caliph. He became the favourite physician of the Caliph al-Mutawakkil under whom he wrote his famous work entitled *Firdous-ul-Hikmat* (the Paradise of Medicine). This book deals not only with medicine but also includes, to some extent, Philosophy, Astronomy and Zoology and is based on Greek, Iranian and Indian works.

Al-Tabari

The next outstanding figure in the medical field was Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Zakaria al-Razi (Europeans called Rhazes) who was born at Rayy near Tehran. Al-Razi was unquestionably the greatest physician during the Middle Ages and one of the greatest physicians of all time. He was a student of Hunayn ibn Ishaq who was well acquainted with Greek, Persian and Indian medicine. Early in life, he learnt music and could play well on the lute. In his youth he practised as an alchemist but in his later years when his reputation attracted pupils and patients from all parts of western Asia, he devoted himself exclusively to medicine. He wrote as many works as two hundred, half of which are medical. One of the most celebrated work of al-Razi is his treatise, 'On Smallpox and Measles' (*al-Judari al-Hasabah*) which was early translated into Latin and later into various languages including English. It was printed not less than forty times between 1498 and 1866. This treatise was considered an ornament to the medical literature of the Arabs. It served to establish al-Razi's reputation as one of the keenest original thinkers and greatest clinicians not only of Islam but of the Middle Ages. But the greatest of his medical works is *al-Hawi* (the Comprehensive Book) which was written in twenty volumes. For each disease he first cites all the Greek, Syrian, Arabic, Persian and Indian authors and at the end he gives his own opinion and experiences. This work was translated into Latin under the auspices of Charles I of Anjou by the Sicilian Jewish physician Faraj ibn Salim in 1279 A.D. under the title of *Continens*. It was printed several times from 1484 onwards. Its influence on European medicine was very considerable.

Al-Razi, the
greatest
physician of
the Islamic
world

Al-Razi was
also chemist
and mathe-
matician

Al-Razi was the chief physician at Baghdad hospital. He is also considered the inventor of the Seton in surgery. Besides medicine, al-Razi left writings on theology, mathematics, natural science and astronomy. The last but one deals with matter, space, time, motion, nutrition, growth, putrefaction, meteorology, optics and alchemy. One of the principal works on alchemy was the *Kitab al-Asrar* (the Book of Secrets) which was translated into Latin by the distinguished translator, Gerard of Cremona. Al-Razi had a prominent contemporary known to the West as Isaac Judaeus who became the Fatimid Caliph of Qairowan in Tunisia.

Ali ibn al-
Abbas

'Ali ibn Abbas (Haly Abbas) was a Persian Muslim of Zoroastrian descent. He wrote an encyclopaedia named 'The Whole Medical Art', known to the Latins as *Liber Regius* (*Al-Kitab al-Malik*). The book deals with both the theory and practice of medicine. It begins with a criticism of previous Greek and Arabic medical treatises. This book was dedicated to the reigning Buwayhid ruler, Azad-ud-Dowla. It was twice translated into Latin but at last superseded by the *Qanun* of Ibn Sina.

Ibn Sina's
reputation as
a physician

Abu Ali Husayn ibn Sina, more commonly known to the West as Avicenna, was the greatest intellectual giant of his age whose immortal works on Medicine and Philosophy have always remained a never-failing source of guidance and inspiration not to the students of those subjects only, but to the wider reading public as well. He achieved his greatest fame in the West as a renowned physician. While still in his teens, the young medical student earned such a higher reputation that he was summoned to treat the Sammanid Sultan of Bukhara, Nuh ibn Mansur. The latter being pleased with his treatment allowed him to read in his library. The young scholar rapidly absorbed the immense contents of the royal library and embarked upon a career of writing at the age of twenty-one. He wrote a good number of books on medicine, philology, philosophy, theology, geometry, astronomy and arts. Nearly all his works are written in Arabic except a few verses. He has composed one or two treatises in Persian.

Ibn Sina's
Canon of
Medicine
was a medi-
cal Bible

His famous work on medicine known as *Canon of Medicine* was the most influential medical compendium to reach Europe from the Arab world. The Canon was a mammoth undertaking, a careful classification and systematization of all the medical knowledge known to the Arabs in the eleventh century. This medical encyclopaedia deals with general medicine, diseases affecting all parts of the body, special pathology and pharmacopoeia. As regards the importance of Ibn Sina's Canon, Prof. Hitti says, "The Arabic text of the Canon was published in Rome in 1593 and was, therefore, one of the earliest books to see print. Translated into Latin by the Gerard of Cremona in the 12th century, this Canon, with its encyclopaedic contents, its systematic arrangement and philosophic plan, soon worked its way into a position of pre-eminence in the medical literature of the age, displacing the works of Galen, al-Razi and al-Majusi and becoming the text-book for the medical education in the schools of Europe. In the last thirty years of the 15th century it passed through fifteen Latin editions and one Hebrew. In recent years a partial translation into English was made. The book distinguishes mediastinitis from pleurisy and recognises the contagious nature of phthisis and the spreading of diseases by water and soil. It gives a scientific diagnosis of ankylostomiasis and attributes it to an intestinal worm. Its *meteria medica* considers some seven hundred and sixty drugs. From the 12th to the 17th centuries this work served as the chief guide to medical science in the West and it is still in occasional use in the Muslim East. In the words of Dr. Osler "It has remained a medical Bible for a longer period than any other work."

Advance-
ment of
medical
science

High tribute has been paid to Ibn Sina by the Italian poet, Dante who placed him in the illustrious company of Hippocrates, Galen and Sacliger. As a psychologist, Ibn Sina foreshadowed twentieth-century theory on brain localization. He taught that the external senses—sight, hearing, tongue, taste and smell—were centred in the brain. The Arabs emphasised upon the brain and not the heart, as the

seat of reason and sense, represented an immense step forward in medical science. With Ibn Sina, Islamic medicine reached its zenith in the East.

Astronomy

Observatory
erected by
Mamun

Astrolabe

Mathematics

The next contribution of the Arabs was in astronomy and this astronomical study was begun under the influence of an Indian work, called *Siddhanta*. This work was translated by Muhammad ibn Ibrahim al-Fazari at the order of Mamun. During the first half of the 9th century, the first regular observations were made at Jundi Shapur (S. W. Persia). Mamun erected at Baghdad an astronomical observatory under the direction of a converted Jew. Sind ibn 'Ali, al-Abbas Ferghani, three sons of Musa ibn Shakir, al-Battani, Abu Hasan and many other eminent astronomers flourished during this period. Musa ibn Shakir's sons made special study of astronomy. They "ascertained the size of the earth, the obliquity of the ecliptic, the variations in the lunar latitudes, the precession of the equinoxes, etc". Among the astronomer-mathematicians was the famous al-Khawarizmi whose '*Kitab Surat al-Ard*' was written in explanation of maps in the first of the ninth century. Ibrahim al-Fazari constructed an astrolabe.

The Muslims made original contributions in the realm of mathematics. The science of Algebra, invention of decimal arithmetic, discovery of plane and spherical geometry, the Arabic numerals and the use of zero are some of their inventions and discoveries.

There were good number of mathematicians among the Muslims who shone like radiant stars in the horizon of intellectual firmament of Islam during the Middle Ages. Of the mathematicians, Muhammad ibn Musa Khwarizmi occupies an outstanding place in the history of great thinkers, who had enriched the diverse branches of knowledge during the era of early Islam. Being one of the greatest scientists of all time and the greatest of his age, Khwarizmi has made lasting contribution to the domain of mathematics, astronomy and geography. As a mathematician, he has left ineffaceable marks on the pages of mathematical history of the world.

He was undoubtedly one of the greatest and most original mathematicians the world has ever produced. About his celebrated works on algebra entitled *Hisab al-Jabr al-Muqabalah*, Prof. Hitti says, "Translated in the 12th century in Latin by Gerard of Cremona, the work of al-Khwarizmi was used until the 16th century as the principal mathematical text-book of European Universities and served to introduce into Europe the science of algebra and with it the name. Al-Khwarizmi's works were also responsible for the introduction into the west of the Arabic numerals called algorism after him." Al-Khawarizmi's mathematical works were the principal source of knowledge on the subject to the world for a considerable time. George Sarton pays him a high tribute when he considers him as "one of the greatest scientists of his race and the greatest of his time." He systematised the Greek and Hindu mathematical knowledge. The oldest arithmetic composed by him in Arabic was known as *Kitab al-Jama al-Tafriq* which has been lost in Arabic. Al-Khwarizmi was the first exponent of the use of numerals, including zero, in preference to letters. It was through him that Europe learnt the use of zero or cipher. His work on the Indian method of calculations was translated into Latin by Adelard of Bath in the 12th century. Al-Khwarizmi has the distinction of being one of the founders of algebra and developed this branch of science to an exceptionally high degree. This great book, *Hisab al-Jabr al-Muqabalah* contains calculation of integration and equations presented through over 800 examples. He also introduced negative signs which were unknown to the Arabs. The translation of Khwarizmi's algebra by Rebert Chester marks an epoch for the introduction and advancement of this branch of science into Europe. "The importance of Rebert's Latin translation of Khwarizmi's algebra," says a modern Orientalist, "can hardly be exaggerated, because it marked the beginning of European algebra."

Taiyab (850 A.D.) was the first writer on trigonometry. Yakub ibn Ishaq al-Kindi (874 A.D.)

Al-Khwarizmi was a great mathematician Mahani Tusi

Tayab

was the distinguished scholar of mathematics, astronomy and natural philosophy. He is said to have written more than two hundred books on astronomy, optics, euclid and meteorology. Muhammad bin Isa al-Mahani (804 A.D.) is credited with the invention of modern algebra. He wrote on trigonometry, astronomy, solid geometry and cubic equations. He demonstrated methods of using algebra to solve a whole field of intermediate science problems. He made observations on the solar and lunar eclipses and planetary conjunctions.

Mahani

Al-Beruni

Abu Raihan Muhammad al-Beruni (973—1049 A.D.) was one of the greatest scientists of all times. He was the most original and profound thinker that Islam has ever produced in the domain of the physical and mathematical sciences. He was not only a scientist but also a historian, philosopher, naturalist, geologist, mineralogist, astronomer and mathematician. He had a keen geographical sense and his conclusions in that connection deserve high merit. He has written on various subjects after close investigation. Of his books, (1) Chronology of Ancient Nations, (2) History of India (*Kitab al-Hind*), (3) An Astronomical Encyclopaedia entitled 'Masudi Canon' and (4) A Summary of Mathematics, Astronomy and Astrology. Born in one of the suburbs of Khwarizm (Khiva), he was captured by Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni on the fall of Khiva. His *Kitab al-Hind* may be regarded as one of the most significant productions in the field of regional geography. He wrote monumental work, *Qanun al-Masudi* under the patronage of Sultan Masud. On the mathematical and astronomical side of geography, al-Beruni discusses the antipodes and the roundity of the earth, the determination of its movement and gives the latitudes and longitudes of numerous places.

Umar al-Khayyam

Among the later mathematicians who were influenced by al-Khwarizmi was Umar ibn Ibrahim al-Khayyam (1123 A.D.), the greatest mathematician in the 11th century. He was not only a distinguished mathematician and astronomer but also a famous poet. He had written several treatise on arithmetic, algebra and astronomy. His solution of

the euclid and liquidratic equations with the help of conic sections is the most advanced work of Arabic mathematics. Abul Walid Ibn Rushd (1198 A.D.), the greatest Arab philosopher of Spain, wrote on externity of universe, planets, and eclipses. He is said to have worked on spherical trigonometry and on the theory of aeronautics also. Muhammad Nasiruddin Tusi (1247 A.D.), an all round scholar with a fine synthetic brain, was another famous astronomer and mathematician. He worked on arithmetic, geometry, plane and spherical trigonometry and on astronomy. He gave proof of Pythagorous theorem, made observation at Maraghah in which he set up huge rings for ecliptical, solstitial, equatorial armillaries purposes. He edited most of the mathematical works of antiquity to the number of sixteen which practically constituted the whole scientific knowledge of the period.

Nasiruddin Tusi

After materia medica, astronomy and mathematics, the Muslims made their greatest scientific contribution in chemistry. Chemistry grew out of alchemy which the Islamic scientists did much to improve and advance. Their greatest contribution to the world's store of knowledge was the accumulation of scientific facts and the advancement of scientific theories and methodology. "Modern chemistry", says Mr. Humbold, "was admittedly the invention of the Muslims, whose achievements in this sphere were of unique interest." They conclusively proved the worthlessness of ancient chemistry. They found out the chemical affinities of mercury, lead, copper, silver and gold and knew the chemical process of oxidation and calculation. The Muslims were the first to teach the world "distillation, filtration and crystallisation. They knew how to change a liquid into vapour. It was in Muslim Spain that chemistry was first established and had the Muslims not been defeated at Poitiers, it would have reached its zenith there.

Chemistry

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Jabir ibn-Hayyan, known as Geber in the western world, is the father of modern chemistry. His name is the greatest in the field of medieval chemical science.* He clearly recognised and stated the importance of experimentation than any other early

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chemistry

alchemist and made a noteworthy advance in both theory and practice of chemistry. He wrote some five hundred treatises on chemistry. His works after the 14th century were the most influential chemical treatises in both Europe and Asia. He discussed scientifically the two principal operations of chemistry, calculation and reduction. Jabir improved on the methods for evaporation, sublimation, melting and crystallisation. He discovered for the first time nitric acid, sulphuric acid, aqua regia, silver nitrate and several other compounds and knew how to produce aqua regia in which gold and silver could be dissolved. He was the prophet and forerunner of positive and dynamic science. From his studies, he was able to predict the vast part which gases would be found to play in the make-up and composition of elements and more complex substances. He brought system and order to chemical science and made it almost a sacred art. He was followed by others whose originality and industry, profoundness of knowledge and keenness of observation evoke the astonishment of readers.

Al-Razi &
Ibn Sina

Other important chemists of that era were al-Razi (Rhazes) who re-discovered sulphuric acid and aqua-vitae and Ibn Sina (Avicenna), a renowned doctor, who helped to systematise medical chemistry. Later on, al-Razi became celebrated all over Europe and was considered the foremost authority and master of chemical science by all men of learning.

In spite of overwhelming evidence to the contrary, European historians have deliberately exaggerated the so-called inferiority of Arabian science. Ignorance and superstition reigned supreme in Europe while the Arab peoples were attaining a literary and scientific renaissance. When the Arabs were making epoch-making discoveries in their world, the Europeans were placing a premium upon every conceivable kind of social and political evil. A case in point is the field of chemistry which was considered one of the most significant realms of science by the Arabs. They called it "the Science of Key". As the science of chemistry advanced, the other sciences progressed apace.

The Muslim savants not only kept themselves confined to the advancement of science but they made great contributions in other branches of knowledge.

The Muslims cultivated philosophy with as much zeal as the exact sciences. Al-Ghazali, al-Kindi, al-Farabi and Ibn Sina are the most famous philosophers in Islam. Al-Farabi was called by the Arabs a second Aristotle. He wrote various psychological, political and metaphysical works. Ibn Sina was a philosopher, physician, philologist and poet. He systematized the philosophies of his predecessors, both Muslims and Greeks. "He was the forerunner of compendium writers for the whole world."* With him ended the great age of Arab Philosophy.

Philosophy

The Arab Muslims invented the "mariners" compass" and voyaged to all parts of the world in search of knowledge or in pursuit of commerce. They established colonies in different parts of the globe. They discovered the Azores and "it is surmised that they even penetrated as far as America". Voyage and pilgrimage gave them inspiration to the study of geography. Ibn Khurdebeh, Jaihani, al-Masudi, al-Istakhri, Ibn Hawkal, Yakut, al-Bakri, al-Muqaddasi and Idrisi are the most famous of Arab geographers.

Geography

In the domain of history the Muslims also made great progress. Baladhuri, Hamadan, Masudi, Tabari and Ibn al-Athir were the outstanding historians during the Abbasid period. Baladhuri's 'Futuh al-Buldan' is written in an admirable style and it marks a distinct advancement of the historical spirit. Al-Masudi is famous both as a historian and a geographer and was certainly one of the most versatile of the fourteenth century writers. He travelled throughout the Muslim countries. His book 'Muruj al-Dhahab wa Madan al-Jawahar' is a record of his travelling experiences and observations.

History

The eminent scholars who shed lustre on Arabic and Persian literatures are Ispahani, Ibn Khallikan, Abu Nuwas, al-Buhtari, Mutannabi, Dakiki, Firdausi, Unsuri, Jalaluddin and Abul Faraj Muhammad bin Ishaq. It was at this period that the Muslims "after the Romans cultivated the science of jurisprudence

Literature

Juris-
prudence

and evolved therefrom an independent system". Their system, fiqh (knowledge), was first based on the Quran and the Hadith. But when it could not solve the complicated problems, private interpretation became essential. The permission of private interpretation culminated in the establishment of four orthodox schools headed by Abu Hanifa, Malek Shafei and Hambal. Thus "the host of literateurs and savants who flourished during the period directed their minds to every branch of human study" and revolutionised thinking, feeling and action of man by the might of their pen.

PART V

THE UMMAYYADS IN SPAIN

CHAPTER XXVII

THE Umayyad Amirate in Spain

Abdur Rahman (139—172 A.H./756—788 A.D.)

As-Saffah, the first Khalifah of the Abbasid dynasty massacred almost all the members of the house of Umayyah after his accession to the throne. One of the very few who eluded the vengeance of Saffah was Abdur Rahman ibn Mu'awiyah, a grandson of Hisham.

Abdur
Rahman
escaped

Having escaped from the cruel hands of Saffah, he was wandering from place to place, from country to country, helpless and homeless. After a sojourn of five years at Palestine, Egypt and North Africa, Abdur Rahman finally reached Ceuta where he was given shelter by the Berbers, the maternal uncles of the fugitive. He then sent Badr who had joined him in Palestine to his clansmen across the Straits to enlist their sympathy and support in his struggle for power. The condition of Spain was favourable for him, for the Muslims were divided into two hostile camps—Mudar and Himyar. So, his message was received with enthusiasm and he was invited by the Himyarites who did not like the titular governor, Yusuf. Abdur Rahman, taking this opportunity, landed on the shores of Spain in the year 755 A.D. The Himyarites flocked to his standard and he was soon able to meet the Governor in the open field. The battle which gave him the throne was fought at Masarah. Yusuf was defeated and ultimately lost his life. The banner of the Umayyads was thus raised in Spain.

Abdur
Rahman
at Ceuta

Landed in
Spain,
138 A.H.

Battle of
Masarah
and defeat
of Yusuf

But Abdur Rahman was not allowed to enjoy the fruits of his labour and valour peacefully. The Arab nobles could not tolerate the supremacy of one man. Their cause was further strengthened by the Berbers who were once the staunch supporters of the new ruler (Amir). They began to rise in revolt against the authority of Abdur Rahman and their

Rising of
the Arab
chiefs

The rebels
suppressed

Loss of
many cities
to the
Muslims

Invasion
of Spain
by Charle-
magne

Death of
Abdur
Rahman in
683 A.D.

Character

rising was often encouraged and helped by the Frankish king Pepin and his son Charlemagne. But fortunately for Abdur Rahman as there was no unity among the Arab nobles, he was able to get rid of all the enemies within a few years. The Arab rebels were totally crushed and the authority of the new Amir was restored in the land.

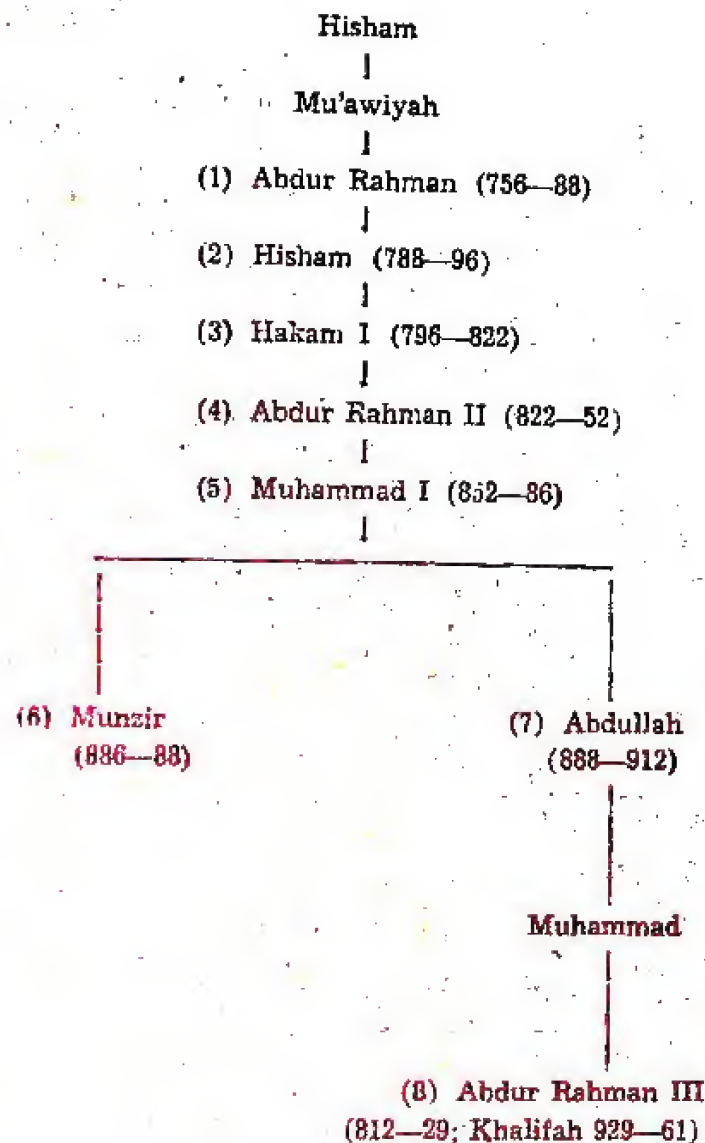
Whilst Abdur Rahman was seriously engaged with the insurgent nobles, the Muslims of Spain were harassed by their Christian neighbours. The Christians burnt their cities, made them homeless and sold them into slavery. During this period of anarchy the Muslims lost many of their cities.

In the year 161 A.H./777 A.D. one of the rebels who rose in arms against Abdur Rahman, fled to Charlemagne to seek his help. Charlemagne who was also seeking opportunity to extend his authority, responded to his call and crossed the Pyrenees with a huge army. He reached the walls of Saragossa which was defended by Husayn bin al-Ansari but here he sustained a disastrous repulse and hastily retreated to his country. He was attacked on the way by the sons of Sulayman. He lost many of his paladins and his rear-guard was cut to pieces. He was then forced to conclude a treaty with Abdur Rahman.

Thus all the risings and conspiracy which disturbed his reign were completely crippled and crushed and the power of the driven and homeless Umayyads began to rise in the western horizon. But the reviver of the power did not live long to enjoy the work of his life. He died in 683 A.D. after a reign of thirty-three years.

Abdur Rahman had proved himself a great general and conqueror. His triumph earned him the praise even of his enemies. It was no small credit that a homeless wanderer had founded a great empire and united under his sceptre a realm which seemed already parcelled out amongst the petty chieftains. He was an able administrator. Himself a poet, Abdur Rahman was a patron of learning

GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE UMAYYAD AMIRS OF SPAIN



and arts. He adorned Cordova with many magnificent buildings. Though able and energetic, he was cruel and vindictive. Under his despotic rule, no honourable man would enter his service. Abdur Rahman did not assume the title of *Amirul Mume-nin* but was pleased with the simple title, *Amir*.

Hisham I (172—180 A.H./788—796 A.D.)

Abdur Rahman was succeeded by his son Hisham. Hisham was a mild and liberal administrator. Taking the opportunity of his leniency his own brothers rose against him just after his accession. After subduing them he proceeded towards Ebro to put down another rebellion raised by the son of Sulayman. The rebel was defeated and killed, and the authority of the Umayyads was restored in Saragossa and Barcelona.

War with the Franks

After bringing peace to the empire Hisham turned his attention to the North. The neighbouring Christians occasionally attacked the Muslim territory, killed its people and devastated the city. Hisham wanted to teach them a good lesson and with this object he sent two armies against the Franks. Both the armies were successful in their enterprise. Narbonne was re-captured and the Galician tribesmen under their leader Bermudale were forced to sue for peace.

Hisham had the highest respect for Imam Malik, the founder of one of the four principal Sunni Schools of Law. He introduced the Maliki doctrines in Spain and henceforth "it became the State religion of Andalusia. The 'Fakihs' exercised great influence in the State".

Character

Hisham died in the year 180 A.H./796 A.D. after a reign of eight years. He was a just and generous ruler, "truly religious and a model of virtue". His acts of piety were numberless and in him the indigent and the oppressed found their protector. He used to walk at night through the streets of Cordova

His brothers
rose in
revolt

Maliki
doctrines
introduced
in Spain

in the guise of a simple man to know the complaints of the poor. He also visited the sick and would often go forth on stormy nights to carry food to some pious invalid and to watch beside his bed. He distributed money among those good souls whom rain and cold could not deter from attending the mosques at night time. Though he was just, mild and amiable, he showed sufficient firmness when his throne was threatened by the conspirators and rebels. He rebuilt the bridge of Cordova and completed the Cathedral mosque begun by his father. Indeed he was a benevolent ruler.

Just and
generous
ruler

Hakam (180—207 A.H./796—822 A.D.)

After the death of Hisham, his son Hakam succeeded him. Hakam had to face a good many difficulties on his accession. He found himself surrounded by enemies from all sides. His own uncles rose against him. One of them named Abdullah went to Charlemagne at Aix-la-Chapelle and secured the help of the Frankish king. With the help of the Franks he captured Toledo and Sulayman, brother of Abdullah, got possession of Valencia. At the same time, Louis and Charles entered into the Muslim territory and Alfonso, the Galician chief, invaded Aragon.

Accession
of Hakam

Surround-
ed by
enemies

But Hakam was not a man to be cowed down. He faced the situation with courage and determination. He defeated the Galicians, drove the Franks from his country, and then he turned towards Toledo. Sulayman was discomfited and killed in a battle. Abdullah was forced to surrender. Whilst Hakam was thus engaged in subduing the rebels, the Franks captured Barcelona. The capture of this important town was a great loss to the Muslims.

Sulayman
killed

Capture of
Barcelona
by the
Franks

In the year 190 A.H./805 A.D. rebellions broke out in Cordova but were suppressed with severity. Tortosa was captured in 192 A.H./807 A.D. by the son of Charlemagne. Abdur Rahman, son of Hakam, soon delivered it from the hands of the captor.

Revolt in
Cordova

Toledo was once the capital of Spain. So, the past history of this pompous capital rankled in the hearts of the Toledians and led them to rise against

Rising in
Toledo

the Arabs. Several times the people of Toledo rose in revolt and were suppressed on every occasion. At last Amrus was appointed Governor of Toledo. He had a great influence over the people of the locality and with their help he restored peace and tranquillity in the city. After ten years when the Toledians again revolted, Amrus was asked to bring them to book and he invited the principal citizens into his castle and put them to the sword. After this massacre the Toledians "maintained a submissive attitude for the next seven years".

Peace
restored

Unrest in
Cordova

In the year 199 A.H./814 A.D. the Cordovans suddenly burst into rebellion and besieged the king in his palace. Hakam met the insurgents with energy and presence of mind. The rioters were dispersed and the leaders were executed. A peace treaty was concluded with the successor of Charlemagne after two years of this incident.

Character

Hakam died in 207 A.H./822 A.D. after a reign of twenty-six years. His reign was one of continual struggle and troubles. Ibn al-Athir describes him "as wise, courageous and accomplished and the first among Andalusian sovereigns who surrounded himself with pomp and pageantry". He was a patron of poets, musicians and scholars but he was not on good terms with the 'Fakibs'. He did not allow them to interfere in the State affairs and thus being excluded from the State affairs they became alienated and tried to overthrow the authority of Hakam. They rose against him and created disturbance. But Hakam with a firm determination and calm attitude met all these dangers and saved the palace and the dynasty.

Wise and
courageous
ruler

Abdur Rahman II (207—288 A.H./822—852 A.D.)

The death of Hakam left a comparatively tranquil inheritance to his son Abdur Rahman whose reign "was one of peace and splendour". Just after his accession Abdur Rahman had to fight with the neighbouring Christians who were frequently making raids over the frontiers. The chief of Leon took the lead of these incursions. Abdur Rahman sent a strong force against these Christian tribesmen. They

The raids
of the
Christian
tribesmen

were defeated and their fortresses were razed to the ground. It was at this period that the Normans raided the coasts of Spain but retreated on the approach of the Muslim fleet and army.

The inroad
of the
Normans

Towards the end of his reign the fanatical Christians of Cordova rose in revolt against Abdur Rahman under whose rule the Christians were allowed to enjoy every sort of right and privilege. The liberal Christians adopted some of the manners and customs of the Arabs but the fanatics did not want this, and so they despised and criticised the liberal Christians. They entertained and spread false ideas and fables about the Prophet and his doctrines. They publicly cursed the Prophet and his religion. Abdur Rahman realized the gravity of the situation and wanted to bring it under his control by peaceful means. With this end in view he called a synod of the ecclesiastics and placed the matter in the hands of an eminent Christian Gomez, but all his efforts ended in failure. He then took drastic action against these offenders but the sudden call of the Great Father forced him to leave the work unfinished.

The agitation
of the
Christians
in Cordova

Denounced
by the
fanatics

A synod of
the eccle-
siastics

His death

Abdur Rahman died after a reign of thirty years. In his reign the people were happy and prosperous and the financial condition was satisfactory. He was a lover of arts and letters. He converted Cordova into a second Baghdad. He built palaces, laid out gardens and beautified his capital with mosques, mansions and bridges. Many learned men adorned his court. The famous musician Ziryab who came from Baghdad was one of them.

Character

Lover of
arts and
letters

Muhammad (238—273 A.H./853—886 A.D.)

Muhammad succeeded his father Abdur Rahman II in the year 352 A.D. After his accession the Toledians helped by the chief of Leon, rose in revolt. Muhammad led the army in person and met the rebels near Guadacelete where the latter were defeated. After this they submitted to Muhammad. The agitators of Cordova now began to feel the weight of this ruler. Muhammad took steps to stamp out the rebellion in the capital city and within a short

The
Toledians
rose in
revolt

Rebellion
in Cordova
stamped
out

time restored order in the city by suppressing the power of the rebels.

The
Normans

The Franks took advantage of this internal disorder and made incursions into the Northern provinces. The Normans again in 245 A.H./859 A.D. appeared on the coasts of Spain but they were driven off with the loss of several ships.

Rebellion
of Musa

Towards the close of his reign, serious rebellions broke out in different parts of the empire. A Spanish Muslim, named Musa, declared himself independent in Aragon. In the West, Ibn Marwan, assisted by the Chief of Leon, revolted. But a more serious and formidable rebel arose in the mountain range between Ronda and Malaga. Here, 'Umar bin Hafsun organized a band of brigands and founded an independent State. He was encouraged by the frontier Christian princes as well as by the king of the Franks. Muhammad being too old to take the field in person, appointed his son Munzir to lead the expedition against these rebels. Munzir marched upon the North and captured Saragossa. He then led his expedition against Ibn Marwan. The latter was defeated and his fortress was razed to the ground. When Saragossa again fell into the hands of the Aragonese rebels led by Muhammad who entered into alliance with 'Umar bin Hafsun, Munzir was forced to take the field. The rebels, being defeated, fled to the mountains but taking advantage of the retirement of the royal army, 'Umar bin Hafsun reappeared. Munzir again proceeded against him and besieged the country but before the surrender of the rebels the news of his father's death reached him and raising the siege he hastened to the capital to secure his succession to the throne.

Death of
Muhammad

Character

Talron of
crudition

Muhammad was a wise and just ruler. He reigned for thirty-four years with good reputation. He improved the condition of the common people and organized the Government on a regular basis. He was a patron of education and "a lover of science". He was succeeded by his son Munzir who showed his energy and vigour in suppressing the rebels during the last portion of his reign.

Munzir (273—275 A.H./886—888 A.D.)

Munzir was an energetic and brave ruler. During his short reign the people were prosperous and happy. Had he lived long, he could have restored complete peace and order in the country. He marched against 'Umar bin Hafsun after his accession to the throne and laid siege to his country. The rebel submitted to him but again rose in revolt. Soon after Munzir led the army personally but was killed.

Energetic
and brave
ruler

'Umar bin
Hafsun
rose in
revolt

Abdullah (275—300 A.H./888—912 A.D.)

Munzir was succeeded by his brother Abdullah in whose time, says Ibn al-Athir "Andalusia became filled with disturbance and rebels arose on every side and thus it remained throughout his reign". He ascended the throne at the most critical juncture of Spanish history. Revolts and insurrections reigned throughout the empire. He was not only opposed by the Spanish mountaineers, but also by the Arab aristocracy. Serious fracas broke out between the Arabs and the people of Seville and Elvira and those rioters were defying the royal authority. 'Umar bin Hafsun took advantage of the external disturbances to extend his authority in every direction and even ventured to march upon the capital. Abdullah's General Obaydullah was sent against the rebel to teach him a lesson. Obaydullah inflicted a crushing defeat on 'Umar which secured the safety of the throne. After this victory all the rebels submitted to him and the royal authority was again established in the distracted land. At this stage of regaining peace and order, the old king passed away after a troublesome reign of twenty-four years.

Accession
of
Abdullah

Surrounded
by many
difficulties

Obaydullah
defeated
'Umar

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE UMAYYAD KHILAFAT IN CORDOVA

Abdur Rahman III (300—350 A.H./912—961 A.D.)

Abdullah was succeeded by his grandson Abdur Rahman, a young man of 21 years of age. Abdur Rahman came to the throne when struggles and troubles had exhausted the empire. So, his accession was hailed with satisfaction on all sides and his relatives took him as the saviour of the distracted empire. The young prince very soon succeeded in winning the favour of the people and the Court. His handsome presence and princely bearing made him highly popular, and it was with a feeling of new hope that the Cordovans watched the proceedings of the new Sultan.

His policy

Abdur Rahman immediately after his accession made no secret of his intention. He abandoned once for all the policy of his grand-father, which had undermined the strength of the empire. He announced that he would permit no disobedience throughout the empire. He summoned the disaffected nobles and chieftains to submit to his authority failing which they would be seriously dealt with. Most of the principal cities submitted to him.

In the year 301 A.H./913 A.D. Abdur Rahman appeared before the army and his troops were inspired to see their gallant young sovereign at their head and they followed him with enthusiasm. The rebels, tired of their chaotic condition, opened their gates after a mere show of resistance. One after another the great cities of Spain admitted the Sultan within their walls. The country to the south of Cordova was the first to surrender, then Seville opened her gates, the Berbers were reduced to obedience and even the Christmas of Spain, who were the arch enemy of the king, submitted to him. Dur-

ing this time Bobastro was captured and Badajoz was reduced. The Toledians, inspired by the chief of Leon, rose in revolt, but after a siege of two years they were compelled to capitulate unconditionally. Henceforth the Sultan was the sole authority in the State.

Capitulation of Toledo

Raids of the Christians

Abdur Rahman now waged war against the Christians of the North who menaced the empire. They occasionally raided the Muslim territory, devastated the country and put the Muslims to the sword. They were also destroying the Arab civilization. But with the approach of the Sultan they retreated to their mountainous homes.

Retreat of the Christians

The Sultan had hardly been seated two years on the throne when Ordonia II of Leon carried a devastating foray to the walls of Merida. Abdur Rahman was at this time engaged with the Fatimids in Africa. He sent an army first under his vizier Ahmad ibn Abu Abda and then under Hajib Badr. The latter defeated Ordonia II but thinking that the Leonese were not sufficiently humiliated, Abdur Rahman in 308 A.H./920 A.D. took the field in person and completely defeated Ordonia II. But after a few days Ordonia in co-operation with Sancho, the chief of Navarre advanced towards the Muslim territory. The Sultan saw the danger and without wasting time attacked the country of Sancho and captured its capital and razed the city to the ground. About this time Ordonia II of Leon died and the civil war which broke out between his sons, gave the Sultan time to attend to other matters.

Defeat of Ordonia

Defeat of Sancho

The rulers of Andalusia had contented themselves with the titles of Amir and Sultan. But on his return from the successful campaign, Abdur Rahman III assumed the title of Khalifah with the style of *al-Nasir-li-Din Allah* (the defender of the faith of God).

Assumed the title of Khalifah

The civil war had now given place to the authority of Ordonia's worthy son Ramire II. Ramire had a special hatred against the Muslims and so when he

Accepted him as a saviour of the empire

Submission of the rebels

Capture of Bobastro

The governor of Saragossa and Ramire II defeated

got the power in his hand he began to raid into the Muslim territory. Abdur Rahman marched against him and tried to bring him into the open field. Ramire, being unable to cope with the Khalifah joined with the Governor of Saragossa who had recently risen in arms against Abdur Rahman and devastated the Muslim territory. The Khalifah met this danger with his usual energy. He first laid siege to Saragossa and forced the rebel governor to surrender. After the submission of the governor, he turned towards Ramire. Ramire was badly defeated in several battles. At last he took shelter in the hills. Thus the whole of Spain was now at the feet of Abdur Rahman.

In the year 329 A.H./940 A.D. Abdur Rahman, Governor of Badajoz, inflicted a crushing defeat on Ramire. On his death his son Ordoña III sued for peace and a treaty was concluded between Abdur Rahman and Ordoña III by which the latter acknowledged the suzerainty of the former.

Abdur Rahman was driven out of Africa

During this time the Fatimid Khalifah of North Africa was extending his power towards the West, and in co-operation with the rebel, Umar bin Hafsun was trying to overthrow the Umayyad rule in Spain. To check the progress of the Fatimid Khalifah he was helping the minor principalities of Western Africa. At first he was successful. But being heavily engaged with the Christian tribesmen in the North he was driven out of Africa.

The Khalifah had a dislike for the Arab nobles in Spain. So he was introducing the foreigners in his army. This favouritism of Abdur Rahman for the foreigners alienated the Arab nobles who met at the battle of al-Khandaq or the Ditch in which the Muslim army suffered a disastrous defeat resulting in the siege of Zamora.

Sancho's authority re-established by Abdur Rahman

Sancho of Leon, being expelled from his dominions by his subjects, took refuge with his grandmother, Tota. The latter, being unable to help her grandson, sought the help of Abdur Rahman. Her prayer was granted and Sancho's authority was re-established after the defeat of the usurper in 348

A.H./959 A.D. The Khalifah died in 350 A.H./961 A.D. after a glorious reign of nearly fifty years.

An estimate to Abdur Rahman III

Abdur Rahman III was unquestionably the greatest of the Umayyad rulers of Spain. He came to the throne when Spain was passing through chaos and confusion. He found the country a prey to anarchy and civil war, rent by factions and parcelled out amongst a hundred petty chiefs of diverse races. Out of chaos and a vision of imminent danger he restored peace and order in the country. Within a few months of his accession he obtained the submission of the provinces of Elvira, Jain and Seville and the Christians of Spain. After a siege of two years, Toledo surrendered to him unconditionally. Thus the sole authority of the Sultan was established over all classes of his people.

Restoration of peace and order

Being freed from the internal troubles, Abdur Rahman turned his attention towards the external enemies. He frustrated the hope of the Fatimids of Africa who wanted to establish their authority in Spain. He also curbed the growing power of the Christians in the North and convinced them of his superiority so much so that they came to him to settle their differences and restore them to their rights. He had saved Andalusia from herself, as well as from foreign domination. He had raised her to a nobler and mightier position than she had ever attained.*

Saviour of Spain

Abdur Rahman not only saved Spain from the internal and external enemies but also made her great and prosperous. He installed a good administration and increased the national revenue. He spent a great part of the revenue for public works. He constructed roads with light and water supply. Abdur Rahman patronised education, fostered agriculture, and encouraged industry and commerce.

Prosperity of Spain under Abdur Rahman III

Under Abdur Rahman, civilization made a gigantic stride in all aspects. Architecture greatly flourished during his rule. According to the report of the historians Cordova had 300 mosques, 100 splendid

Footnote: See p. 11, 12.

Establish-
ment of
schools

He accumulated no fewer than four hundred thousand of books in the Imperial Library of Cordova, "the catalogue of which alone consisted of forty-four volumes". The door of his library was open to the scholars, scientists and philosophers. For the education of his people he established many schools in the capital. The result of this was that "in Spain almost everybody knew how to read and write, whilst in Christian Europe, save and except the clergy, even persons belonging to the highest ranks were wholly ignorant". The University of Cordova was, at the time of Hakam, one of the most renowned in the world. In consideration of the intellectual progress during this period, historians have described the reign of Hakam II as the Augustan Age of Arabian learning in Spain.

Hakam died in 366 A.H./976 A.D. and with him ended the glory of the Umayyad rule in Spain.

Hisham II

Hakam left the crown to his son Hisham II, a boy of eleven years of age. As Hisham was unfit for affairs of the State, the rule went to his mother Subh, a woman of great ability, and her trusted agent Muhammad ibn Abi Amir on whom the charge of the minor boy was placed by Hakam in his lifetime. This agent was an ambitious man. After seizing the ministry he assumed the title of the Hajib al-Mansur and built a magnificent palace for himself. He organised the army by introducing the Berbers in place of the Arabs. He undertook many campaigns against the Christians of the North and in these he was remarkably successful. He extended the Umayyad power over the North-Western Africa. He now became so powerful that he was all in all in the State and the Khalifah was merely a puppet in his hands. Letters and proclamations were issued in his name; he was prayed for from the pulpits and commemorated on the coinage.

Hajib
al-Mansur

Campaigns
against the
Christians

Al-Mansur, the Bismarek of the tenth century, died in 393 A.H./1002 A.D. at Medinaceli. He was possibly the greatest statesman and general of Arab-

Spain. "He had given to Spain a power which it had not enjoyed", says Dozy, "even in the times of Abdur Rahman III". Under him Muslim Spain was more prosperous than before. He encouraged learning and "patronized the learned men with generous munificence". He was just and generous and his sagacity and love of justice became a proverb. He was succeeded by his son al-Muzaffar who kept the unity of the empire for six years. After his death serious disturbances arose in the empire. Muzaffar left the Hajibate to his brother Abdur Rahman called Sanchol. Abdur Rahman was extremely ambitious. He wanted to be the Khalifah of Cordova. No sooner had he left for the expedition in the North than a revolt, headed by Muhammad, broke out in Cordova. His palace was plundered and reduced to ashes. Hisham abdicated in favour of Muhammad who took the title of Mahdi. Sanchol was afterwards taken prisoner and put to death. But the new Khalifah did not reign long.

Bismarek
of the
tenth
century

Abdur
Rahman
Sanchol

Muhammad
al-Mahdi

Death of
Sanchol

Sulayman

Muhammed was soon replaced by another Umayyad named Sulayman. Thus the rise and fall of the Khalifahs went on simultaneously. After a few days Hisham II was again placed on the throne. The capital now became the scene of disorder and confusion.

The Christians of the North were now on the move. They saw their opportunity and they made most of it. Alfonso VI who ascended the throne of Castile in 458 A.H./1065 A.D. and had united under his sway the three kingdoms of Leon, Castile and Navarre collected a large army and occupied Toledo.

Alfonso VI

Before finishing the account of the Umayyads of Spain something should be said about Cordova, the capital of the Umayyad Khalifahs in Spain.

Cordova

Cordova was a most flourishing city of Spain. "It", says an Arab writer, "is the Bride of Andalusia. To her belong all the beauty and the ornaments that delight the eye or dazzle the sight. Her long line

Bride of
Andalusia

of Sultans forms her crown of glory, her necklace is strung with the pearls which her poets have gathered from the ocean of language; her dress is of the banners of learning, well knit together by her men of science, and the masters of every art and industry are the hem of her garments".

Palace of
az-Zahra

Cordova, under the rule of the great Khalifahs was indeed a capital to be proud of and "no city of Europe could compare with her in the beauty of her buildings, the luxury and refinement of her life and the learning and accomplishments of her inhabitants". The Arab governor had adorned the city with numerous beautiful structures but its systematic embellishment on a grand scale was begun by Abdur Rahman I. One of his acts was to build an aqueduct for the supply of pure water to the capital from the hills of the vicinity. Cordova was full of magnificent buildings among which were counted more than 50,000 houses of the aristocracy and official classes, more than a hundred thousand dwellings for the common people, seventy libraries and numerous book-shops. The beautiful palace of az-Zahra was one of the wonders of the world. It was built by Abdur Rahman III as a suburb of Cordova after the name of his beloved wife az-Zahra, 'the Fairest'. This famous palace was made of pure marble brought from different parts of the world. It dazzled the eyes of the travellers who confessed that they had never seen such a palace in the course of their travels.

Centre of
culture

Chivalry

"Beautiful as were the palaces and gardens of Cordova, her claims to admiration in case of learning was no less strong". Her professors and teachers made her the centre of European culture. Students flocked to Cordova from all parts of Europe to study under her famous doctors. Every branch of science was studied here with particular care, and medicine received greater attention by the discoveries of the doctors and surgeons of Andalusia. Astronomy, geography, chemistry, natural history—all were studied here with ardour. Literature also received great impetus at the hands of the Khalifahs at Cordova. It was not only a centre of culture but it also nourished chivalry.

In the domain of arts, Andalusia was pre-eminent. The 'City of the Fairest' or the mosque of Cordova would not have been erected, if her workmen had not been highly skilled in their handicrafts. Silk weaving was among the most cherished arts of Andalusia. It is said that there were no less than one hundred and thirty thousand weavers in Cordova. To sum up these points we can say that in arts, science and civilization the Moorish city of Cordova was indeed "the brightest splendour of the world".

Silk
weaving

CHAPTER XXIX

PETTY MUSLIM DYNASTIES OF SPAIN

The Almoravides (al-Murabitun)

While the Umayyad power in Spain was falling to pieces, a new power on the Western Africa was raising its head. The Muslim chiefs of Spain forgetting their differences at that critical moment appealed to Yusuf bin Tashfin, the king of the rising Almoravides of Western Africa, for help. Yusuf responded to their crying call and crossed to Spain in 479 A.H./1086 A.D. He was joined by the chief of Andalusia near Seville. The united army met Alfonso at a place called Zallaqah, where a sanguinary battle was fought in which Alfonso was defeated. This victory of Spain made Yusuf the king of Spain. But he did not enjoy his reign long. He soon died and was succeeded by his son Abul Hasan. Abul Hasan was a man of considerable ability. He defeated the Christians in several battles. During his reign another new power named Almohades was rising in Africa. The Almoravides were soon replaced by the Almohades.

The Almohades (al-Muwahhidun)

Muhammad ibn Tumart, a native of Sus in Western Africa, took Abdul Mu'min as his lieutenant. After the death of Abdul Mu'min, his brother, Abu Yakub Yusuf was elected in his place. He was a generous prince. He was succeeded by his famous son Yakub under whom the Almohade power reached its zenith. Yakub died in 596 A.H./1199 A.D. Yakub was a just and generous ruler. He established many hospitals for the poor and did a lot of good to the subjects. Himself a great scholar, he protected the learned. After his death the Christian power began to rise. The Crusaders defeated by Salahuddin in Palestine, returned to Europe and began to join the army of Alfonso IX. The Christians

Yusuf bin
Tashfin

Battle of
Zallaqah
and defeat
of Alfonso

The
Almo-
hades

Muhammad
ibn Tumart

Yakub

resumed their attacks on Andalusia and the Muslims under the Almohades opposed the Christians at al-Ukab but the Almohades were completely defeated by the vast combined army of the Christians. An-Nasir, the king of the Almohades, died soon after at Morocco. He was followed by several successors who proved unworthy of their posts and brought about the fall of the dynasty. With the fall of the Almohades, several independent kingdoms again began to rise out of Muslim Spain. Among the petty kings who rose in power after the fall of the Umayyad Khilafat in Spain, Muhammad ibn Yusuf ibn-Nasr, commonly known as ibn al-Ahmar proved himself most successful, for he founded a kingdom which was a centre of civilization for more than two centuries and a half.

Battle of
al-Ukab

Fall of the
Almohades

Rise of Ibn
al-Ahmar

Kingdom of Granada

The kingdom of Granada was the last fortification of the Moors in Spain. After the conquest of Valencia, Cordova, Seville and Murcia by Ferdinand III of Castile and Jayme I of Aragon, the rule of the Moors was restricted to the province of Granada and the people of the conquered cities came to place their swords at the disposal of the one remaining Muslim king. But in spite of that Granada was forced to become tributary to the Castilian crown. The founder of the kingdom, Ibn al-Ahmar, was a vigorous ruler but "he could not withstand the power of the Christians who now held nearly the whole of Spain". He paid homage to Fernando and his son Alfonso. But at last he was able to free himself from their yoke and from that time forward Granada with its surrounding territory was generally let alone by the Christian king.

Ibn al-
Ahmar,
the found-
er of
Granada

The Christians from time to time made attacks upon Granada but they were badly beaten on every occasion by the reigning rulers. For two centuries the Moors saved the honour and prestige of Granada but towards the third quarter of the fifteenth century, the falling knell was about to sound.

The
Christians
made attacks
upon
Granada

The union of Aragon with Castile by the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella was the note of

Abul
Hasan re-
fused to
pay customary
tribute

Capture of
Zahra

Ferdinand
captured
Alhamra

Abdication
of Abul
Hasan

doom. These combined forces could not leave the Moors undisturbed. Abul Hasan who was the then ruler of Granada, paved the way of their attack. He refused to pay the customary tribute asked for and when the ambassador of Ferdinand came to insist, he made a haughty reply—"Tell your sovereign that the kings of Granada who paid tribute are dead. Our mint now coins nothing but sword blades". To show him the meaning of his reply, he attacked and captured Zahra.

The Christian became furious at this end to take revenge of it. Ferdinand made a sudden attack of Alhamra and captured it. The women and children who took shelter in the Cathedral mosque were mercilessly killed by the Castilians. "The fall of Alhamra foreshadowed the doom of Granada". But in spite of this danger, the Muslims could not forget their differences and stood together against the common enemy.

Abul Hasan attempted twice to retake the city but the sudden insurrection of his son Abu Abdullah at the capital, compelled him to come back to Granada. A treaty between father and son enabled the old king to relieve Loxa but when he learnt that his rebel son had made himself the master of the whole of Granada, he fell back on Malaga. The Christians despatched a huge force into the province of Malaga which at first met with success. But soon they were attacked by Muhammad XII nick named, al-Zaghal, brother of Abul Hasan, and his lieutenant Rizwan at Ashsharkia and routed terrible slaughter. Just after this, Boabdil (properly Abu Abdullah), the king of Granada attacked the Castilian town of Lucena but he was badly beaten and ultimately taken prisoner. At this moment Abul Hasan abdicated the throne in favour of al-Zaghal.

The capture of Boabdil by the Christian sovereign was a fatal blow to the Moorish power. The Christians found in Boabdil the greatest weapon for the overthrow of the Moorish power in Andalusia. They received him with honour and induced him to become their vassal. "As soon as they had completely mastered their tool, they sent him back to

Granada with Castilian army to capture Granada. Al-Zaghal who was the last great Moorish king of Andalusia proposed to Boabdil to reign together and stand jointly against the common enemy. Had he been helped by Boabdil Granada might have remained in the hands of the Moors. But the ungrateful young man refused to accept al-Zaghal's proposals. While he himself was trying to foil the efforts of his brave uncle al-Zaghal, the Christians were capturing Alora, Kasr-Boneia, Ronda and other important cities. Loxa and Malaga also fell into their hands later on. Only a few cities like Baeza and Al-mora remained in the hands of al-Zaghal. Ferdinand now began to push his army towards Baeza. Al-Zaghal, driven to desperation, appealed to the Muslim ruler of Africa but no response came forth. He at last, after a gallant resistance, lost heart and submitted to Ferdinand. He was allowed to hold the district of Andarax with the title of king. But he was soon exiled to Africa. Only Granada remained for the Moors. On the deposition of al-Zaghal, Boabdil, the ruler of Granada, was asked to surrender the city. He, now fully realizing his folly, refused to comply with the request. Being assured by the people of Granada, led by Musa, he began to carry the war into the enemy's quarter and they succeeded in capturing some of the frontier posts. But with the coming of spring Ferdinand came with an army consisting of 40,000 foot and 10,000 horse and laid siege to the last strong-hold of Islam in Spain. The Moors made a last desperate attack upon the enemy. Musa and Boabdil fought like heroes at the head of their cavalry. But being reduced to terrible straits, "the besieged at last determined to surrender. Famine did the work that no mere valour could effect". When there was no hope of withstanding the enemy, they sent delegates to the Castilian camp to arrange the conditions of capitulation. Boabdil surrendered on the following terms:—"That the city of Granada should be delivered over to Christians, that the king should take the oath of obedience to Ferdinand and that he should receive some property in the Alpuxarras and that the Muslims should be left secure in person

Al-Zaghal,
the last
Moorish
king

City after
city fell
into the
hands of
the Chris-
tians

Fall of
Beaza

Boabdil
took up
arms
against the
Christians

Terms of
capitula-
tion

Fall of
Granada

and religion". On January 3, 1492 A.D. the last of the Moors thus came under the possession of Ferdinand.

Expulsion
of Boabdil

After the capitulation, Boabdil came to live at Andarax but his presence in Spain was looked upon by Ferdinand with a suspicion of future danger to the Castilian kingdom and he was soon exiled to Africa where he passed the rest of his life.

Ferdinand and Isabella, on the other hand, could not think it proper to abide by the capitulation. In 898 A.H./1492 A.D. Ferdinand issued a decree by which the Moors were given the choice of baptism or exile. The mosques were closed, the valuable Arabic manuscripts were burnt and Islamic culture was banished altogether. The majority of the Moors yielded finding it easier to spare their religion than their homes but the old Moors clung to their faith and they were inhumanly tortured and executed by the persecutors. In spite of these cruelties and atrocities, the Muslims defended themselves and in 907 A.H./1501 A.D. gained a victory at Jabal Balansa. But temporary success only aggravated the reprisals of the exasperated Christians. The Count of Tendilla stormed Guejar and Ferdinand was seizing the key by the passes, the Castle of Lanjaron. The remnant of the rebels fled to Morocco, Egypt and Turkey. Thus the first revolt was suppressed.

Victory of
Jabal
Balansa

Oppression
by the
Christians

Final
expulsion
of the
Spanish
Arabs

The Moors were now forced to make a profession of Christianity. They did it outwardly but in their hearts they were not so. "They took care to wash off the holy water with which their children were baptized, as soon as they were out of the sight of the priest". As time went on, the Christians became more and more cruel and false. They ordered the Muslims to take up the Christian manners and customs. When the oppression exceeded its limits, the Muslims rose in arms. After three years of continual struggle the insurrection was suppressed and crushed by wholesale butchery and devastation. It is stated that "no less than three millions of Moors were banished between the fall of Granada and the first decade of the 17th century".

PETTY MUSLIM DYNASTIES OF SPAIN

Thus the centre of civilization, seat of arts and science, of learning and every form of refined government, 'passed away from the hands of the Muslims; and with the disappearance of the Muslims, the Christian Spain shone for a while like a moon with a borrowed light; then came the eclipse and on that darkness Spain has grovelled ever since'.

Fall of the Umayyad Khalifat in Spain

Rise and fall of an empire is the law of Nature. The Muslims ruled over Spain for a period of nearly eight hundred years. So, the fall of Spain after such a long lapse of time is not an unusual event.

Causes. Spain reached the zenith of its power and prosperity during the first few Khalifahs of the Umayyads in Spain. But after the death of Hakam II, there were no efficient Khalifahs. The weak successors of Hakam II could not cope with the growing situation of the empire. During the reign of his successor Hisham II, Hajib al-Mansur, the wazir of the empire ably piloted the ship of the State. Under him, Spain reached its highest water-mark. He was succeeded by his sons, Muzaffar and Abdur Rahman, one after another, to the wizarate of Muslim Spain. In the regime of the latter, there was a serious disturbance in the city of Cordova and this led to the execution of Abdur Rahman. The gross inefficiency of the successors of Hakam II and Hajib al-Mansur hastened the fall of the empire.

Weak
successors
of Hakam
II and
Hajib al-
Mansur

Mansur's military ability and wonderful talent for organisation was a source of constant terror to the neighbouring countries. He undertook fifty-two campaigns and came out successful in all these expeditions. He reduced Leon and Navarre to the condition of tributary provinces and garrisoned their capitals. He turned against Catalonia, sacked Barcelona and drove out the French Counts. A large part of Western Africa was also reduced to subjection by his generals. These created bitterness against the rule of Mansur and led to the rise of insurgents who were trying to overthrow the Muslim rule.

Bitterness
of the rule
of Mansur

Disunity
of the
Muslims

The Hijaz Arabs and the Yaman Arabs were at dagger's drawn with one another. Their continued jealousy and hostility prevented them from standing united under one banner to defend their country from foreign aggressions.

Enmity
of the
Berbers
and the
Slaves

The newly converted Muslims could not tolerate the aristocratic rule. So, they stood against the Khalifahs. After the death of Abdur Rahman III, Hakam II and al-Mansur, the different sections of the nation formed themselves into different sections of their own. Among them the Berbers and the Slaves became the most powerful. They quarrelled with each other for their supremacy in Spain and to set their nominees to the Spanish throne. This kind of anarchy and confusion largely diminished the strength of the Umayyad power. Moreover, the Berbers and Slaves became very powerful in the empire. The influence of the Slaves reached such a pitch that they took advantage of the decay of the central power and set up independent dynasties for themselves. The Berbers overthrew the last Umayyad Khalifah Hisham III from power. Thus the enmity of the Berbers and the Slaves constituted one of the factors for the fall of the Muslim power in Spain.

Economic
deadlock

The Muslims confiscated the properties of the wealthy Spaniards. They also confiscated the properties of the lords and clergies who helped the Galicians against the Khalifah. The Muslims could not satisfactorily handle the properties and consequently incurred the loss of revenue. The Slaves who were given the right to vote and the propriety of the lands subject to a fixed revenue to be paid to the Khalifahs withheld payments of revenue to the Muslims. There were terrible famines in Spain during Muslim rule. The hatred and disturbance between the proletariat and the industrialists also led to the decline of revenue. These chronic shortages of revenue paralysed the system of administration and contributed to the fall of the empire.

Besides internal foes, who were many in number, the Khalifahs had to fight with external foes. The Christian tribes of North Spain wanted to

expel the Muslims in order to establish their own authority. They massacred a large number of Muslims and elected their own king. The Berbers of North Africa who had a prejudice against Islam raided into the territories of the Muslims and harried the defenceless Muslims with fire and sword. These gave a death-blow to the Muslim rule in Spain.

Christians
of North
Spain

Berbers of
North
Africa

The Muslim empire in Spain had no national sentiment. Its army were constituted of the Christians, the Berbers and the Spaniards. These ingredients regarded the Arab Muslims as foreigners. The Arabian rule in Spain could not establish the ties of nationalism among the component races and consequently the whole empire was divided into integral parts. This completely paralysed the Muslim rule in Spain.

Disintegra-
tion of the
empire

The later Khalifahs led a pompous and luxurious life. They did not care for the welfare of the people. They enjoyed their time with wine, women and music. These sapped the vitality of the youthful society and completely alienated them from public sympathy hastening the downfall of the Muslim rule in Spain.

Moral
degrada-
tion of the
rulers

CHAPTER XXX

CULTURAL PROGRESS IN MUSLIM SPAIN

Muslim Spain opens one of the brightest chapters in the intellectual history of Islam, nay of the whole world. The Spanish Muslims were not only the bearers of the torch of culture and civilization but also medium through which ancient science and philosophy were recovered. Spain became the centre of the highest culture under Arab Muslims. Scholars and students from different parts of the world flocked to Spain for learning. Granada, Cordova, Seville and Toledo became the homes and birth place of "eminent scholars, distinguished poets, accomplished soldiers ; men fit in every respect to serve as models".

In literature the most distinguished author was Ibn Abdur Rabbi, and Ali ibn Hazn was the greatest scholar and the most original thinker of Muslim Spain in the 11th century. He wrote 400 volumes on history, theology, tradition, logic, poetry and allied subjects. Muslim Spain produced a number of poets of whom Abul Walid Ahmad ibn Zaydun was the most prominent. The period also witnessed a number of historians. Ibn al-Khatib, Ibn Khaldun, Abu Ubaydullah, al-Bakri and Abu Marwan Hayyan ibn Khalaf, surnamed Ibn Hayyan, were the prominent historians of the Arabs in Spain. "Ibn Khaldun" says Prof. Hitti, "was the greatest historical philosopher Islam produced and one of the greatest of all time". The fame of Ibn Khaldun rests on his famous book, *Muqaddamah*.

The best geographer of Spain in the 11th century was al-Bakri, and al-Idrisi was the most brilliant geographical author. Ibn Jubayr, al-Masuni and Ibn Batuta were the famous travellers, who travelled almost all the Muslim countries of the world.

Astronomical studies were greatly cultivated in Andalusia. The bulk of the Spanish astronomers

"believed in astral influence as the cause underlying the chief occurrence between birth and death on this earth. Al-Majirite of Cordova, al-Zarqali of Toledo and Ibn Aflah of Seville were the outstanding astronomers of this period. Abdullah Ibn Ahmad Ibn al-Baytar was the best known botanist of Spain and one of the greatest of the Muslim world.

Al-Zahrawi, a court physician of Hakam II, was the greatest Arab surgeon. Ibn Zuhr was another famous physician and can be compared with al-Zahrawi in the field of medicine. Many of the members of his family were scholars and physicians, and enjoyed the favour of the rulers of Andalusia. Ibn Zuhr was the chief physician to Abu Yusuf Yaqub al-Mansur. Ubaydullah ibn al-Muzaffar al-Bahili was a physician as well as a poet.

The brilliant achievement of the intellectual class of the Muslims in Spain was in the realm of philosophic thought. Solomon bin Gabirol was the earliest philosopher of Arabic Spain. Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Yahya ibn Bajjah was the greatest philosopher in the 12th century. He was eminent as a philosopher, scientist, physician, musician, astronomer and commentator on Aristotle. He wrote several treatises on astronomy and philosophy. Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Abdul Malik ibn Tufayl was another remarkable philosopher of Muslim Spain. He was also famous as a physician, a mathematician and a poet. Ibn Bajjah and Ibn Tufayl shed an imperishable lustre on the court of the Muslim Spain. Ibn Rushd distinguished himself as an astronomer, a physician, and a commentator of high order, and above all as a philosopher. His chief contribution to medicine was an encyclopaedic work entitled 'al-Kulliyat fi-at-Tibb'. But his fame rests on his philosophical work, *Tahafut al-Tahafut* (the incoherence of the incoherence). Besides these, there were many scholars and savants who flourished in Muslim Spain and whose names and works cannot be mentioned here for want of space.

Spanish women were not confined to kitchens. They contributed much to the intellectual greatness

Astronomers

Botanist

Physicians

Philosophers

Poets

Historians

Geographers
and travellers

Women in
literary
field

of the Arabs in Spain. "Her daughters," says Ameer Ali, "were no less famous in literature and the names of Nazhun, Zaynab, Hamda, Hafsa, al-Kalayyah, Safia and Maria shed an ineffaceable lustre on the land of their birth. Muslim Spain produced a large number of women writers, women poets and women doctors. Ayesha was famous as a writer and a poet. Hasana at-Tamimiyah and Umm-ul-Ula were celebrated as poetesses. Al-Walladha was a talented lady of Anadlusia, whose home at Cordova was the meeting-place of wits, savants and poets. Al-Aruz-ziah of Valecia was a distinguished grammarian and rhetorician. Hafsa was a gifted lady who was "renowned for her beauty, her talents, her nobility and her wealth". Marium of Seville was a famous teacher. She taught rhetoric, poetry and literature. Asma al-Amariah, Umm-ul-Hina, Itimad ar-Rarnidkiya and Busina held a high rank among the scholars of the day.

Many of the Muslim rulers of Spain were distinguished patrons of education. Under their patronage Spain reached the summit of her glory in the intellectual horizon of medieval Europe.

PART VI THE FATIMIDS

CHAPTER XXXI

THE FATIMIDS OF EGYPT

Origin of the Fatimids

There is a great controversy about the origin of the Fatimids. The Fatimids claimed themselves as the direct descendants of Hazrat Ali and Fatimah, and hence they styled as the Fatimids after the name of Fatimah. According to them, Ubaydullah al-Mahdi, the founder of the Fatimid dynasty in Africa was the great-great grandson of Ismail, the son of Jafar Sadiq, the sixth Imam of the House of Hazrat Ali and Fatimah.

Rise of the Fatimids

After the death of Imam Jafar Sadiq, a section of the Shi'as accepted Musa al-Kazim as their Imam while the other section of the Shi'as recognised the Imam of Ismail's son Muhammad al-Maktum. People of this Shi'ite section who supported the claims of Ismail's descendants to the Imam were known as the Ismai'lites. The Ismai'lite sect remained obscure till the rise of Abdullah ibn Maymun who gave a definite shape to the religio-political system of the Ismai'lites. He organised a vigorous Ismai'lite propaganda with a view to restoring the Fatimids to power. He sent secret missionaries (da'is) to all parts of the Muslim world to convert the people to the Ismai'lite doctrines and thus prepared the ground for the rise of Fatimid dynasty in Africa and Egypt.

Ismailite
propaganda

Before his death in 874 A.D., Abdullah ibn Maymun found a zealous supporter and organiser in Abu Abdullah al-Husayn, a native of Yaman 'who towards the close of the ninth century proclaimed himself precursor of Mahdi'. He went to North Africa and by his forceful preaching secured the adhesion of the powerful Berber tribes, especially the Kitamah tribe to the cause of the Ahl al-Bayt. At that time Ibrahim bin Muhammad was the ruler of North

Abu
Abdullah
al-Husayn,
the chief
propagan-
dist of the
Ismailite
movement

Africa. He tried to check the Isma'ite movement but in vain. After his death, his son Ziadatullah became the ruler of North Africa. Ziadatullah also tried to suppress the Isma'ite movement but he was twice defeated by the Isma'ilites.

Sa'id proclaimed Imam under the title of Ubaydullah al-Mahdi

Having completed his task, Abu Abdullah wrote to the Isma'ite Imam, Sa'id ibn Husayn at Salamiyah in Syria, the headquarters of the Isma'ite propaganda to come to North Africa and place himself at the head of the movement. Sa'id ibn Husayn accepted the invitation and, declaring himself to be the son of Muhammad al-Habib, a great grandson of Ismail, reached the dominions of Ziadatullah. He placed himself at the head of the Isma'ite movement and inflicted a crushing defeat on Ziadatullah. He captured Tunis, the capital of the Aghlabids in 909 A.D. and drove Ziadatullah, the last Aghlabid ruler out of his country. Sa'id was then proclaimed Imam under the title of Ubaydullah-al-Mahdi. Thus the Fatimid rule was established in North Africa and al-Mahdi became the first Khalifah of the Fatimids.

Al-Mahdi (297—323 A.H./909—934 A.D.)

A capable ruler

Al-Mahdi proved himself a capable ruler. Two years after his accession he killed his missionary commander Abu Abdullah al-Husayn, who had entered into a conspiracy with his brother Abul Abbas against the Khalifah. He extended his power over the whole African territory from the frontier of Egypt to the province of Fez in Morocco. In 914 A.D. he captured Alexandria. He took possession of Syria, and Malta, Sardinia, Corsica, the Balearic and other islands felt the power of his fleet. In 920 A.D. the Khalifah founded a new city on the Tunisian coast and made it his capital. The new capital was named Mahdiah after the name of the Khalifah.

Foundation of a new city

Al-Mahdi was a pious Muslim. He made his influence felt to the free-thinkers of his kingdom and brought them to order. He wanted to conquer Spain from the hands of the Umayyads and with this end in view he established friendly relations with the rebel Ibn Hafsun of Spain. But his ambition was not fulfilled on account of his sudden death in 934 A.D.

His death

Al-Qa'im (323—335 A.H./934—949 A.D.)

Al-Mahdi was succeeded by his eldest son Abul Qasim who received the title of al-Qa'im on his accession. He followed the policy of his father. He sent a fleet in 934 A.D. which harried the southern coast of France, took Genoa and coasted along Calabria, massacring and plundering, burning the shipping and carrying off slaves wherever it touched. He at the same time despatched a third army against Egypt, but the firm hand of Ikhshid now held the Government and his brother Ubaydullah drove the enemy out of Alexandria. When al-Qa'im was about to attain his success, he was seriously disturbed by the revolt headed by a Khariji named Abu Yazid Makad who defeated the Fatimid troops again and again. It was only after seven years of uninterrupted civil war that this formidable insurrection died out under the third Khalifah al-Mansur.

Al-Qa'im followed the policy of his father

Al-Qa'im was a famous warrior. He personally conducted most of his military operations. He was the first Fatimid Khalifah who, in order to obtain the command of the Mediterranean, applied himself to the creation of a powerful fleet. He died in 946 A.D., while Abu Yazid was laying siege to Susa. He was succeeded by his son al-Mansur.

Al-Mansur was an energetic young man. He proved himself capable of crushing the rebellion of Abu Yazid who was ultimately executed. Though his son and some of his adherents continued for a while to give trouble, practically the whole of Africa again submitted to the Fatimids. He built a splendid city in the neighbourhood of Susa which was named after him, al-Mansuriyah.

Al Mansur (946-962)

Al-Mu'izz (341—352 A.H./965—975 A.D.)

On the demise of al-Mansur, his son Abu Tamim Ma'd ascended the throne under the title of al-Mu'izz. "With the fourth Caliph, al-Mu'izz," says Lane-Poole, "the Fatimids entered upon a new phase". He chalked out his plans just after his accession and tried to execute them without delay. He first made a tour of his dominions, acquainted

With al-Mu'izz the Fatimids entered upon a new phase

Conquest of Morocco

Loss of Crete

Sicily conquered

himself with the conditions of the empire and took proper steps for its peace and prosperity. He bearded the rebels in their fastness till they laid down their arms and fell at his feet. He adopted a conciliatory policy towards the chiefs and governors and was soon rewarded by their loyalty. Within a short time, peace was restored and the country became prosperous.

After consolidating his empire, al-Mu'izz directed his attention to the expansion of his territories. When Abdur Rahman III of Spain was occupied with the Franks in the north, he took advantage of it and sent his General Jauhar to Morocco. The Umayyad Governor tried to check his advance but he was defeated and Morocco was captured.

The conquest of Morocco was followed by a long struggle between the two Muslim powers. When a vessel of the Fatimid Khalifah was carrying despatches to Morocco, it was captured by the Umayyads of Spain. At this the Fatimid fleet under Hasan bin Ali raided the coast of Spain. Abdur Rahman III ordered his captains to retaliate it by devastating the neighbourhood of Susa and other places. The struggle between the Umayyads and the Fatimid Khalifah continued for several years. Taking advantage of the quarrels between these two powers the Greeks invaded Crete and occupied it in 967 A.D. Thus Crete which had been conquered and held by the Muslims since the time of Mamun was lost to them.

"The loss of Crete", says Ameer Ali, "was in some measure compensated by the extermination of Byzantine power in Sicily". The Muslim Viceroy Ahmad bin Hasan applied himself to the conquest of Sicily. The Greeks tried their utmost to defend it but sustained a severe defeat at the hands of the Muslims. The whole island was brought under the sway of the Fatimids and Islamic administration was introduced there. A medical university was established at Palermo and this university rivalled those of Baghdad and Cordova. Under the Muslims the inhabitants of Sicily lived in peace and prosperity.

Conquest of Egypt

Entry of al-Mu'izz into Cairo

Cairo founded in 972 A.D.

Power of the Carmathians crushed

"The conquest of Egypt," says Lane Poole, "was indeed the aim of his life and to make Egypt a most prosperous and flourishing town was his dream". Al-Mu'izz had been looking for an opportunity to fulfil his object and it was at last offered to him. In the year 356 A.H./968 A.D., serious troubles broke out in Egypt and the nobles of that province invited the Khalifah to come and conquer the province. The long expectation came to be fulfilled and in response to their call he sent his famous General Jauhar to Egypt with a well-equipped army. Jauhar entered the capital, al-Fustat in 357 A.H./969 A.D. without any opposition. With his victorious entry the Ikshidid rule came to an end and the Fatimid authority came to power in Egypt. Immediately after his entry into al-Fustat, Jauhar began to construct a new city which he named al-Qahira, the triumphant. Al-Qahira is modern Cairo. It became the capital of the Fatimids in 973 A.D. After founding the new capital he built the great mosque, al-Azhar in 972 A.D. The next Khalifah (al-Aziz) made this great mosque of al-Azhar an academy and in course of time famous al-Azhar University rose out of this academy.

Al-Mu'izz had hitherto remained in Africa, but with the victory of his General Jauhar he entered the city of Cairo in 973 A.D. and received the allegiance of the people of Egypt. He also received the oath of allegiance from the delegates of Syria and Hijaz and the Khutba was read in his name.

The Carmathians of Syria were badly defeated by the Fatimid General in a battle near Fusta. But yet they did not cease to continue the hostility with the Muslims. They invaded the territory of Egypt and forced the Muslims to take up arms against them. The Khalifah met them at Ainush-Shams (Heliopolis), defeated them and finally crushed their power. When he freed his country from the threats of external dangers, he devoted his attention to the peace and progress of his empire.

Al-Mu'izz introduced a sound and efficient system of administration in the empire. He divided the

Adminis-
trative
reforms

provinces into districts and each district was entrusted to a competent officer. The army was re-organised. Commerce and industry received great impetus at the hands of the Khalifah. Al-Mu'izz took personal interest in all details of administration. His two years' stay in Cairo was marked by many reforms. He appointed a converted Jew, Ibn Killis, and 'Ashuq as administrators of the land revenue department. They found that the revenue collectors and farmers had acquired enormous profit and power. They abolished at one stroke the powers and profits of the revenue collectors. These two officers fixed and supervised all branches of revenue. The result of this supervision was a large increase in State revenue.

Achieve-
ments of
al-Mu'izz

Patron of
arts and
learning

Al-Mu'izz died in 365 A.H./975 A.D. after a glorious reign of 23 years. He was the greatest of the Fatimids of Egypt. It was he who first established the Fatimid rule in Egypt. All internal dissensions and disturbances were ruthlessly suppressed and the people began to enjoy happiness and comfort under him. It was due to his statesmanship, organising capacity and untiring energy that the small Fatimid kingdom rose to a vast and powerful empire. Al-Mu'izz was a great patron of arts and learning. According to Ameer Ali, "he was the Mamun of the West and under him North Africa attained the highest pitch of civilization and prosperity". He was not only highly educated but also a good poet and had great interest in Arabic literature. He knew many languages and mastered Sudani dialects. He was also an eloquent speaker. Historians have described him as a "wise, energetic and chivalrous sovereign, and accomplished scholar, well-versed in science and philosophy and a munificent patron of arts and learning".

Al-Aziz (365—386 A.H./975—996 A.D.)

Al-Aziz succeeded his father, al-Mu'izz in 365 A.H./975 A.D. Brave, wise and comely in person, he was of a humane and conciliatory disposition. Under him the Fatimid empire reached its zenith. The whole of Syria and part of Mesopotamia were

Expansion
of the
Fatimid
empire

Wise and
beneficent
Khalifah

Patron of
architecture

His
generosity

His policy
towards
the
Christians

Policy of
al-Aziz
proved
fatal to the
empire

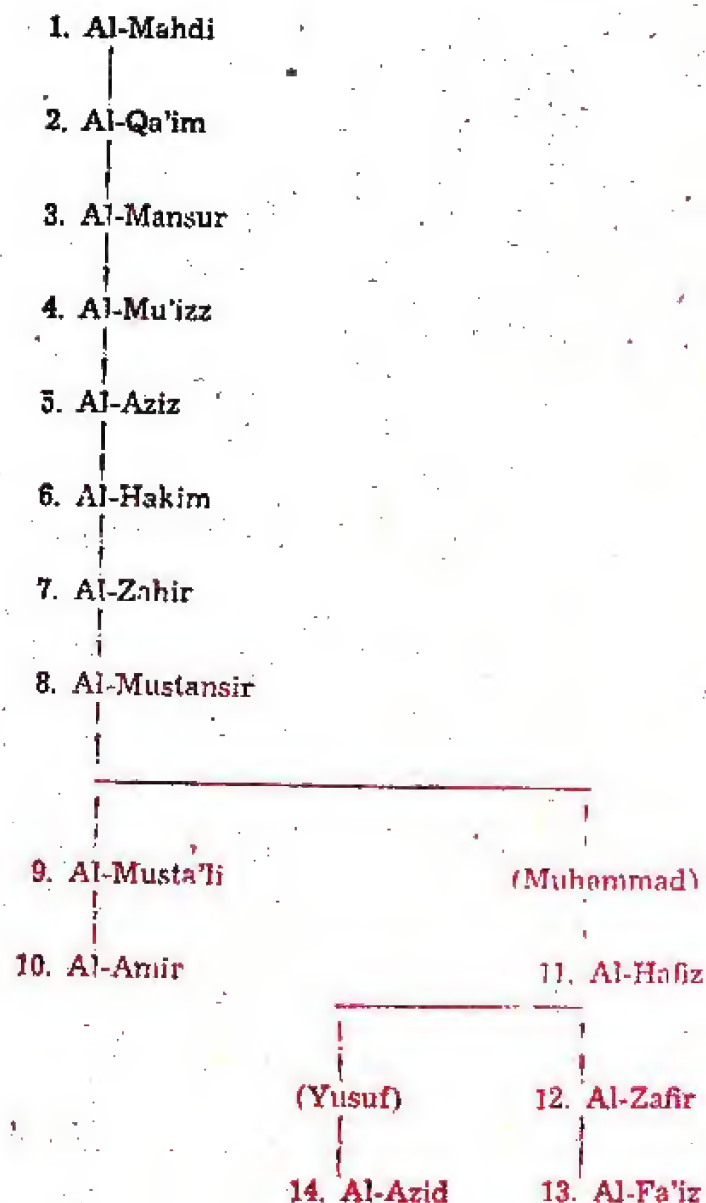
conquered during his reign. His empire extended from the borders of the Euphrates to the Atlantic. The *Khutba* was read in his name not only in Hijaz and Yaman but also in Mosul, Aleppo and other places. The Fatimids of Egypt in his time became a formidable rival of the Abbasids of Baghdad, who were greatly weakened under the tutelage of the Buwayhids. The Fatimid ruler, al-Aziz and the greatest Buwayhid Amir, Azad-ud-dawla cultivated friendship by exchange of embassies.

"Of the Fatimid Khalifahs, al-Aziz was probably the wisest and most beneficent". The unbroken peace which the country enjoyed is its best witness. Both the Muslims and the non-Muslims lived in peace and prosperity. The reign of al-Aziz saw many architectural and engineering triumphs at Cairo, such as the Golden Palace, the Pearl Pavillion, his mother's mosque in the Karafa cemetery. Himself a poet and a patron of learning, al-Aziz converted the Azhar Mosque into an academy. He maintained a splendid court and lived in great pomp and grandeur.

Al-Aziz was very generous and liberal. His generosity was shown even to his arch enemies. When Iftikin, who had created serious troubles against him in Syria and Palestine, was defeated and taken prisoner, the Khalifah not only pardoned him but gave him a high post at his court. The Christians were happy under his benign rule. His wazir, Isa ibn Nastur, was a Christian. The patriarch Ibrahim stood in high favour at the court and obtained permission to rebuild the ruined church outside Fustat. Manasah, a Jew also occupied a high post at his court. It was due to the services of Isa ibn Nastur and Manasah that Egypt enjoyed a long period of perfect peace. But the appointment of non-Muslims to the highest posts was highly resented among the Muslims. The situation was, however, brought under control.

Al-Aziz's policy of recruiting Turkish and Negro troops as a counter-balance against the Berbers proved fatal to the empire. The insubordination and constant quarrels of these troops among themselves and with the Berber bodyguards played an important part in bringing about the downfall of the dynasty.

GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE FATIMID KHALIFAHs



The Turkish soldiers became so powerful in later days that they overthrew the royal authority and established independent dynasties.

Al-Aziz died in 386 A.H./996 A.D. and with him "ended the glory of the Fatimid dynasty".

Al-Hakim—(386—412 A.H./996—1021 A.D.)

Al-Aziz died in 386 A.H./996 A.D. and was succeeded by his only son Abu 'Ali Mansur al-Hakim. Al-Hakim was eleven years of age when he came to the throne. For the first few years he was under the influence of an unscrupulous governor named Barjawan whom his father had appointed. The quarrels between Barjawan and Ibn Ammar, the commander of the troops, resulted in the defeat of the latter. Barjawan now became the regent of the boy Khalifah. Intoxicated with power and riches, he abandoned himself entirely to pleasure and amusement. Al-Hakim began to exercise his power and soon launched upon a career of blood-shed by having Barjawan assassinated.

The reign of al-Hakim was marked with some atrocities. He killed a number of prominent men of the empire without any reason. During the first ten years of his reign, the Christians and the Jews enjoyed the same privileges as under al-Aziz. But as time passed they came to be persecuted. A general order was issued for destruction of all the Christian churches in Egypt and the confiscation of their lands and property. Ibn Abdun, the wazir (secretary), who had to sign the decree for the abolition of the Holy sepulchre was a Christian. The Christians were offered the choice of becoming Muslims or leaving the country or wearing a heavy cross as a badge of their degradation. But whilst these very orders were being issued, Christians were still appointed to high offices of the State. In cooler moments al-Hakim was a generous and liberal patron of learning and science.

Al-Hakim was a man of piety and intelligence. He was the founder of a new cult which is still extant among the Druzes (after its first great missionary al-Darazi) of Lebanon. He was regarded as the incarnation of Diety. His reign was not altogether

Barjawan, the regent of the boy-Khalifah gave up to pleasure

Al-Hakim's reign marked with generosity

Public
worksHall of
ScienceAl-Hakim
killed in
1021 A.D.Loss of
SyriaDivines of
Maliki
School
banished

wanting in public works. He built many mosques, colleges and observatories in Syria and Egypt. His famous monument in the field of architecture is the mosque that still bears his name. He also built the Rashida mosque. At Maks he founded both a mosque and belvedere near the river bank. But his most original foundation was the "Hall of Science" (Dar-al-Hikam) which was erected in 1306 A.D. for the promotion of Shiah theology as well as for the promotion of learning. "Dar al-Hikmah" was furnished with a magnificent library and was connected with the royal palace. The Hall was open to every one. Many visitors and men of letters from far used to meet here.

The Khalifah, later in life, became a lover of solitude and accustomed to wander about at night. But in spite of all this, his atrocities raised a host of enemies in the empire. Even his own sister Sitt al-Mulk whom the Khalifah had charged with unchastity, joined the conspiracy and on February, 13, 1021, A.D. al-Hakim was killed.

Az-Zahir (412—426 A.H./1021-1036 A.D.)

After al-Hakim, his son Abu Hashim Ali was raised to the throne under the title of az-Zahir. At the time of accession he was sixteen years of age. His aunt Sitt al-Mulk acted as regent for four years. After her death the Khalifah was a puppet in the hands of various ministers under whose management of affairs Syria was lost for a time to the Egyptian Khilafat. During his reign, people felt the pinch of scarcity and high prices due to the failure of inundation.

The most notable event of a-Zahir's reign was a solitary religious persecution in 1025 A.D. when all the divines of the Maliki School were banished from Egypt. But he was quite tolerant to the Sunni sect. He made a treaty with the Roman Emperor, Constantine VIII who was allowed to rebuild the church of the Resurrection at Jerusalem. The Khalifah indulged in pleasures and merry-making. He died of plague in June, 1036 A.D. after a reign of nearly sixteen years.

Al-Mustansir (427—487 A.H./1036—1095 A.D.)

Az-Zahir was succeeded by his son Abu Tamim Ma'ad who took the title of al-Mustansir after assuming the office of the Khilafat. His reign of almost sixty years is the longest in Muslim annals. The power was largely in the hands of his mother, as he was then only seven years of age. During his reign the Fatimid power began to decline rapidly. In the first years of Mustansir's reign the affairs were administered by the vizier al-Jarjarai by whose management Aleppo was lost to the Fatimids. After his death the chief influence passed into the hands of Abu Sa'id, a Jew. He was soon assassinated at the instance of another Jew. In this way viziers came and went like ministers of modern republic.

In the reign of Mustansir the Zarida prince of Africa, al-Mu'izz ibn Badis, threw off the Fatimid yoke and caused the Khutba to be read in the name of the Abbasid Khalifah. But the revolt of Bassasiri and the fights of the Abbasid ruler, al-Qa'im, offered al-Mustansir an opportunity to reign his power which was soon lost by the appearance of Tughril who restored the Abbasid power in Western Asia. In the following years the trouble in Egypt caused by the struggles between the Turkish and Negro elements in Mustansir's army nearly brought the country into the domain of the Abbasids. After several battles the Turkish commander Nasir got possession of Cairo and at the end of 1068 A.D. plundered the Khalifah's palace. So, the continual struggles between the soldiers did much harm to the empire. Moreover, severe famine which lasted for seven years had exhausted the economic resources of the country. It was so severe that 'people began to eat each other. Human flesh was sold in public. Plague came to finish what famine had begun. Ladies of rank tried vainly to sell their jewels for bread and threw away their useless pearls and emeralds in the street'. At this critical juncture al-Mustansir called to his help Badr al-Jamali, governor of Acre, who restored peace and order in the kingdom. But after his demise, chaos and confusion again prevailed in the empire. There was none in the list of the Khalifahs who could check the tide of decline.

Rapid decline of the
Fatimid
power
began

Famine

Badr al-Jamali
restored peace

One after another many Khalifahs came to power but none could bring it to its former position. Al-Mustansir died in 487 A.H./1095 A.D.

Al-Musta'li (487—495 A.H./1095—1101 A.D.)

On the death of al-Mustansir his youngest son was raised to the throne with the title of al-Musta'li. The eldest son, Nizar, naturally resented this and set himself up at Alexandria with the governor's approval. But he was forced to surrender after a year.

On Musta'li's death his infant son al-Amir Mansur under the title of al-Amir was declared Khalifah by al-Afzal whose power was absolute for twenty years in Egypt. Al-Afzal was then the virtual king of Egypt and to his mild and just rule the country owes half a century of internal quiet and prosperity. He governed the empire till al-Amir attained the age of maturity.

Al-Amir was soon assassinated. Al-Hafiz, the cousin of the deceased Khalifah, was then proclaimed Khalifah. The reign of Hafiz was disturbed by the factions of soldiers. His son Abul Mansur Ismail who was 17 years old at the time of Hafiz's death, succeeded him with the title, az-Zafir. He was a handsome and careless youth who thought more of girls and songs than of arms and politics. He was merely a doll in the State. All the power and influence fell into the hands of the vizier, Abul Hasari bin as-Salar. Az-Zafir was assassinated by Nasr, the son of Abbas, in the year 1154 A.D.

On the assassination of az-Zafir his infant son Abul Qasem Isa under the title of al-Faiz was placed on the throne. Al-Faiz died before attaining his maturity and was succeeded by his nine-year old cousin al-Azid, the fourteenth and last in a line which had lasted for over two centuries and a half. Hardly had al-Aazid established himself firmly on the throne, the king of Jerusalem invaded Egypt and stood at the very gate of Cairo. But the final stage of the fall of this dynasty came when Salahuddin, the famous warrior of the Crusades, appeared on the scene. He dethroned the Fatimid Khalifah, al-Azid in the year 1171 A.D. and with him ended the dynasty founded by Obaydullah al-Mahdi.

CHAPTER XXXII

ADMINISTRATION, SOCIETY AND CULTURE UNDER THE FATIMIDS

Administration

The Fatimid period marks a new epoch in the history of Egypt. Many of the Khalifahs of this dynasty were great warriors and good administrators. Under their benign rule peace and prosperity prevailed throughout the land.

The administration of the Fatimids was conducted like those of the Abbasids, although some of the offices bore different names. The Khalifah was the temporal as well as spiritual head of the State. The appointment and dismissal of the higher officials rested with him.

The official ministers (viziers) of the Khilafat were divided into two classes—'Men of the sword' and 'Men of the pen'. The men of the sword superintended the army and war office and 'lords of the door,' high chamberlains, etc. Then men of the pen included (1) the Qazi who was also the director of the mint, (2) the chief preacher who presided in the 'Hall of Science,' (3) the inspector of markets who held unrestricted control over the bazars and streets and supervised weight and measures, (4) the State treasurer who presided over the Bayt al-Mal or State Treasury, (5) the deputy Chamberlain, (6) the reader who recited the Quran to the Khalifah in season and out of season'. In the lowest rank of the 'men of the pen' stood the great body of civil servants, comprising clerks and secretaries in the various departments.

Outside these courts functionaries were the local officials who governed the three divisions of the empire—Syria, Egypt and the borders of Asia Minor. Egypt was administered by the governors of Upper Egypt, Sharqiya, Gharbiya and Alexandria. The management of all local affairs was entrusted to the local authorities.

Khalifah

Viziers divided into 'Men of the sword' and 'Men of the pen'

Local affairs entrusted to local authorities

Al-Amir

Al-Afzal,
the governor
and regent

Al-Hafiz

Az-Zafir

Al-Faiz

Al-Azid,
the last
Fatimid
Khalifah

End of the
Fatimid
Khilafat

The army was divided into three principal marks—(i) Amirs who included the highest officers and the sword-bearing escorts of the Khalifah, (ii) Officers of the guard, consisting of masters and eunuchs and (iii) the different regiments carrying such name as *Hafziyah*, *Juyushiya*, *Sudaniyah*, after some Khalifahs or Viziers. The number composing the regiments was very large and varied at different times.

Army consisted of three ranks

The fleet which was stationed at Alexandria, Damika, Ascaton and other Syrian ports numbered over 75 galleys, ten transports and ten galbasses under a high admiral.

Fleet

Social condition

The Fatimid Khalifahs were liberal and considerate to their non-Muslim subjects. Under them the Christians of Egypt were treated with unusual consideration. Except the oppression of al-Hakim, who was a man of different nature, the Copts and the Armenians had never before received so much leniency and benevolence from the Muslim rulers. At the time of al-Aziz they were more favoured than the Muslims and were appointed to the highest offices of the State. Under al-Mustansir and his successors, the Christians lived in peace and prosperity. Most of the financial posts of the government were then in the possession of the Copt. They were the controllers of accounts. Throughout the reigns of the later Khalifahs, churches of the Christians were restored and the Christian officers who recorded it, spoke highly of the Fatimid Khalifahs for their generosity towards the Christians.

Condition of the Christians under the Fatimids

Most of the Khalifahs lived lives of luxury and ease. Al-Mustansir is said to have erected in his palace a Ka'bah-like pavilion where he used to drink to the accompaniment of beautiful singers. The Persian Isma'ili missionary, Nasir-i-Khusraw who visited the country in 1046–1049 A.D. has left a fine description of Cairo. He found Egypt in a state of utmost tranquillity and prosperity. According to him, the shop of the jewellers and money-changers were left unlocked and the people had full c.

Life under the Fatimids as described by Nasir-i-Khusraw

dence in the government and in the amiable Khalifah. The main streets were lighted by lamps. The shop-keeper sold at fixed prices and if any one cheated, he was paraded on a camel through the streets ringing a bell confessing his fault.

The Khalifah whom Nasir-e-Khusraw saw at a festival was good looking and well-dressed. The Khalifah's palace "housed 30,000 persons, of whom 12,000 servants and 1,000 horse and foot guards. Mosques, colleges, hospitals and caravanseries of immense size adorned the city of Cairo". Finely-built public baths were to be found in large number in every part of the town both for men and women. The markets which contained twenty thousand shops were superb and stocked with the products of the world. Nasir was so much astonished at the wealth and prosperity of the country that he emphatically declared, "I could neither limit nor estimate its wealth and nowhere have I seen such prosperity as I saw there".

Cairo

Scientific and literary progress

The contribution of the Fatimids to the progress of knowledge was not so significant as that of the Abbasids of Baghdad and the Umayyads of Spain. The period of their rule was unproductive in writers and scientists of exceptional merit. Bulk of the Khalifahs and viziers were generous in their gifts to scholars, poets and divines. Ibn Killis, the vizier, was the outstanding patron of learning in Fatimid Egypt. He founded an academy and spent on it a thousand dinars per month. During the time of Ibn-Killis there flourished at the court of the Khalifah al-Aziz a famous physician named Muhammad al-Tamimi. Al-Kindi, the famous historian and topographer of Egypt lived at Fustat and died there in 961 A.D. But the most famous men of the early Fatimid time were the Qazi an-Noman and his sons and grand-sons who held the highest legal and religious offices for 40 years from the conquest of Egypt to the middle of the reign of al-Hakim. These Qazis were not merely learned in the law but were men of the highest education of the age. Another cele-

Khalifahs and viziers were generous patrons of the learned

Ibn Killis

Al-Kindi

An-Noman and his sons

Muscbbihi

brated civil servant of the time of al-Hakim was Muscbbihi, an Egyptian by birth, who wrote the history of his country and other works on religion, poetry and astrology.

Many of the Khalifahs of this dynasty were patrons of learning and men of high culture. "Al-Aziz was himself a poet and lover of learning. It was he who made the Azhar mosque an academy".* The wealth of the Fatimid court and the encouragement given by the Khalifahs to the scientists drew many scholars to Cairo. Al-Hakim's court was illuminated by 'Ali ibn Yunus, the greatest astronomer Egypt has ever produced, and Ibn Ali al-Hasan ibn-al-Haytham, the principal Muslims physicist and student of optics'. Besides, many literateurs and scientists adorned the court of the Fatimids.

The Khalifahs established schools and colleges, public libraries and scientific institutions. The Dar al-Hikmah was one of the most remarkable foundations of the Fatimids which was established by al-Hakim in 1005 A.D. for the teaching and propagation of the extreme Shi'ite doctrine. This hall was connected with the royal palace and it contained a library. Al-Hakim was also interested in astromical calculations. 'He built on al-Muqattam, an observatory to which he often rode before dawn on his grey ass'. Observatories thus were erected in various places for the cultivation of astronomy.

The Fatimid Khalifahs were also lovers of art and architecture. They beautified the capital (city) with many magnificent buildings. The great mosques of al-Azhar and of al-Hakim are still standing to testify to their zeal for art and architecture. The three massive gates of Cairo built by Roman architects and the gates of Byzantine fortresses are among the most enduring relics of the Shi'ah government in Egypt.

* P. K. Hira History of the Arabs.

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